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31 March Middle East and South Asia Review

LD3103124189 [Editorial Report]

NOTICE: FBIS wishes to advise that resource constraints will compel discontinuation of the Middle East and South Asia Review effective 1 April.

Lebanon

General Michel 'Awn's cabinet held an emergency meeting to discuss the "disaster" caused by an explosion of the fuel and gas storage tanks in the Al-Dawrah area of East Beirut, the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon reported. The Christian side blamed "Syrian criminal shelling" for triggering the explosion.

Voice of Lebanon radio reported that 78 people were wounded by the explosion and fires, which caused a huge cloud of smoke to spread as far as Cyprus. Two more people were killed and five wounded in further artillery attacks on the Ksrawan coast, the radio said.

According to Radio Free Lebanon, some 140 Syrian soldiers have been killed in the fighting since 14 March.

In other developments, Voice of Lebanon noted that Gen 'Awn has given written messages to the ambassadors of the five UN Security Council permanent member states urging them to work for Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon. The radio also confirmed that 'Awn's naval forces have intercepted and detained a Syrian cargo vessel that was sailing off the Lebanese coast.

Israeli forces killed two "terrorists" north of the security zone in southern Lebanon the night of 30 March, according to Jerusalem radio.

Israel

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said he will propose in Washington that Egypt and Jordan assist Israel in forming an appointed Palestinian delegation to hold peace talks, THE JERUSALEM POST reported. If this effort fails, he will support the holding of elections in the territories if it is clear that they are being held for the definite purpose of holding autonomy negotiations.

On the security situation in the territories, Jerusalem and IDF radios reported that 2 more Arabs died in clashes with Israeli soldiers, while 24 others were wounded. One of the Palestinians was shot dead while attempting to throw a large stone at an Israeli officer, who opened fire from close range.

PLO Affairs

A PLO spokesman cited by Sanaa Voice of Palestine radio stated that the PLO Executive Committee has decided to "appoint" Yasir 'Arafat president of the "independent State of Palestine," adding that this decision will be submitted to the PLO Central Council for approval.

According to Kuwait's AL-SIYASAH, the Central Council will also give the PLO leadership further authorization to continue its present political course. Noting a growing gap between 'Arafat and Faruq Qaddumi over the direction of PLO policy, the paper cited speculation that Qaddumi will soon be replaced by Mahmud 'Abbas as head of the PLO Political Department.

Reporting on the latest round of U.S.-PLO dialogue, Abu Dhabi's AL-ITTIHAD contended that the session was "stormy" and featured a "heated argument" between U.S. Ambassador Robert Pelletreau and a member of the Palestinian delegation.

The PLO reportedly gained the impression that the U.S. Administration opposes a Palestinian state and self-determination and that its sole objective in the dialogue is to end the intifadah (uprising) and gain time for Israel. 'Arafat deliberately chose not to publicize the heated and tense atmosphere at the session so as not to jeopardize the continuation of the dialogue and to bring about confusion in U.S.-Israeli relations, AL-ITTIHAD contended.

Saudi Leader on Arab Affairs

Egypt will attend any future Arab summit conference, Saudi King Fahd stated in remarks to journalists in Cairo cited by MENA. He confirmed that a regular Arab summit is scheduled to be held in Saudi Arabia, noting that the date of the conference will be discussed with other Arab states after Ramadan.

Asked about his contacts with the Syrian and Iraqi presidents, King Fahd maintained that the differences between the two men are "ordinary" rather than "deep." On Syria's policy in Lebanon, Fahd said he believes Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad genuinely wants the Lebanese problem to be solved in accordance with the Lebanese people's wishes.

Commenting on Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's statement that Saudi Arabia will finance the rebuilding of the Iraqi nuclear plant, Fahd said this does not mean establishing a plant to produce nuclear weapons and he stressed his opposition to the establishment of any nuclear projects for military purposes.

Syria

Soviet Defense Minister Dmitriy Yazov left Syria 30 March after holding talks with President al-Asad, Damascus radio reported. During the talks, Yazov expressed

the USSR's appreciation for Syria's "constructive" role in the working for peace, and stressed the importance of bilateral relations being free of "short-term demands or factors," the radio said.

TASS reported that the two sides noted the "successful development" of bilateral relations, "including in the sphere of defense." The report referred to a "growing dynamism" in these relations, adding that the discussion was held in a "warm and friendly atmosphere."

Iraq

'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council (RCC), held a news conference in which he indicated that the RCC may be abolished after the upcoming elections and its powers distributed to parliament, the government, and the president, Radio Monte Carlo reported.

He also said people will be given the freedom to form parties, though the Iraqi Communist Party will not be allowed because it "betrayed" the homeland. Some 953 candidates are contesting the 250 seats in the parliamentary election on 1 April, the radio noted.

Iran

Moscow Talks—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati began talks with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in Moscow 31 March, TASS reported. IRNA noted that Velayati is carrying a message from President 'Ali Khamene'i for Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Comment on Montazeri—Commenting on Ayatollah Hoseyn 'Ali Montazeri's resignation as deputy leader, the clandestine Radio of the Iranian Toilers said this event shows the clerical regime is on its "deathbed." The radio called on all opposition forces to conduct "offensives against the fortresses of the regime."

Afghanistan

Soviet Foreign Ministry official Vadim Perfilyev told journalists that the situation along the Salang Highway remains "complex" as the rebels have captured two security posts and are hampering traffic, Moscow radio reported. Perfilyev also noted that Jalalabad has come under further shelling, which killed 9 people and wounded 25.

The Soviet official claimed that 1,200 Pakistani servicemen clad in Afghan national clothes are assisting the rebel forces besieging the city.

In another report on Afghanistan, Moscow radio claimed that the Afghan opposition is planning to kill some of its Soviet POW's and place the bodies near the wreckage of Soviet aircraft to fabricate evidence of continuing Soviet participation in the war.

An Afghan military source cited by Kabul radio noted that artillery attacks on Jalalabad escalated 29-30 March, but contended that Afghan Government forces compelled their opponents to retreat in a retaliatory attack on enemy lines.

An AFP report on the situation in Kabul stated that food and fuel shortages are "over" as a result of the Soviet airlift.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Organization Claims Credit for Belgian Murders

JN3103125689 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1215 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] In Beirut a secret organization called the Soldiers of Right Organization [Munazzamat Jund al-Haq] has claimed responsibility for assassinating Imam 'Abdallah al-Ahdal, a Saudi national and director of the Islamic Cultural Center in Brussels, and Salim al-Buhayri, a Tunisian national and director of the library.

At the end of 1988, this organization claimed responsibility for assassinating Hasan 'Ali al-Amiri, a Saudi diplomat, in Bangkok. In a statement broadcast today, the organization affirmed it killed the two officials in charge of the Islamic center in Brussels due to their involvement with the Israeli intelligence service, the Mosad, under the guise of carrying out religious activities. The statement also accused the two officials in charge of the center of carrying out acts which harm Islam and of being enemies of both God and Islam.

Arabsat General Assembly Begins Regular Session

JN3003160289 Manama WAKH in English 1540 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Muscat, March 30 (GNA)—General Assembly of the Arab Satellite Telecommunications Organization (Arabsat) began a regular session here today to discuss, among other things, extending the life span of the organization's first generation of satellites.

In an opening address, Qays 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Zawawi, Oman's deputy premier for financial and economic affairs, said the current session was being held amid appropriate circumstances in relation to inter-Arab cooperation and economic improvement.

The Omani official expressed his hopes that the current meetings which will run for three days, will lay the foundations for closer cooperation to realize the objectives of Arabsat and enhance its status as a successful investment venture able to continue providing due services.

He said that Arabsat looked forward to the resumption of Egypt's membership, noting that satellite activities with Egypt constituted 40 per cent of total activities.

Omani Minister on Meeting

JN3103084389 Manama WAKH in Arabic 2030 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Muscat, 30 Mar (WAKH)—Ahmad ibn Suwaydan al-Baluchi, Omani minister of post, telegraph, and telephone, has said the General Assembly of the Arab Satellite Telecommunications Corporation, Arabsat, discussed in today's meeting all pertinent financial topics. The final budget and the financial report for last year as well as this year's budget were approved.

Regarding the position of director general of Arabsat, Al-Baluchi said, in statements after the second meeting this evening, that the meeting has not yet discussed this topic, noting that it will be discussed in the third meeting tomorrow, Friday. On the return of other countries' networks which were linked to the Intelsat [International Telecommunications Satellite Organization], the Omani minister said this topic will be discussed tomorrow. He pointed out that the Arab states which have not yet introduced their stations into this network have promised to complete their stations before the end of this year. Moreover, the Arab states which have not yet conveyed their domestic services to the Arab satellite will do so as soon as possible. Answering a question on marketing the Arab satellite, the Omani minister said this topic will be discussed in future sessions.

Egypt Readmitted

NC3103120389 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1115 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] Muscat, 31 Mar (MENA)—The General Assembly of the Arab Satellite Telecommunications Corporation, Arabsat, today continued the meetings of the 12th session chaired by Ahmad ibn Suwaydan al-Baluchi, Omani minister of post, telegraph, and telephone.

WAKH reports that the discussions during today's meetings will focus on the training for the control network in the fields of satellite engineering and operation, the need for the corporation's executive board to follow up the remarks made by the manufacturer, and a number of other subjects on the agenda. The General Assembly of the Arab Satellite Telecommunications Corporation, Arabsat, opened its 3-day meetings yesterday.

It is worth noting that during its second working session yesterday the General Assembly decided to readmit Egypt to the corporation.

Protocol on Persian Gulf Pollution Signed

LD2903162689 Tehran IRNA in English 1545 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] Kuwait, March 29, IRNA—Health ministers of the 8-member regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME) signed a protocol today to control sea water pollution resulting from oil production.

The protocol in Arabic, Persian and English was signed by envoys from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which all have access to the Persian Gulf, the planet's major oil producing area.

The Iranian envoy at the meeting is deputy prime minister and head of the Environment Protection Organization of Iran Dr Hadi Manafi.

It was also decided, that the ROPME executive committee comprising of ministers from Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Bahrain will meet Thursday [30 March], to reevaluate the organization's projects for protection of the marine environment at the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea during the past year.

Islamic Affairs

Muslim Institute's Siddiqi on Rushdie Case

PM3003155289 London Television Network in English 2230 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Interview with Dr Kalim Siddiqi of the Muslim Institute by news presenter Donald MacCormick in London on 29 March following a report by Francine Stock on the killing of two leaders of the Muslim community in Brussels, monitored in progress in the framework of BBC 2 "Newsnight"—recorded]

[Text] [MacCormick] Joining me now is Dr Kalim Siddiqi of the Muslim Institute in London, who has been a supporter of Ayatollah Khomeyni's campaign against Salman Rushdie. First of all, Dr Siddiqi, do you accept Francine Stock's last point there, that this incident tonight has introduced a new dimension to the whole Salman Rushdie controversy because it seems to be a calculated act of assassination?

[Siddiqi] This may be so, but I think what we have to realize is that a number of lives have already been lost in other parts of the world. We have seen—I think the number of deaths were underestimated in that commentary—the number of deaths is now 40 in other parts of the world. We in Europe have taken it for granted that this cannot happen here. Unfortunately, the root of it all lies in the overreaction by the British Government to the whole affair. Geoffrey Howe, instead of taking a more sober and measured reaction, mobilized Europe, Soviet Union, America, Japan, the whole of the Western World against Islam; took on the world of Islam and the West in global confrontation.

[MacCormick] May I just point out to you that France, for example, in the person of their prime minister, Mr Rocard, was much more forthright than Sir Geoffrey or Mrs Thatcher was in invoking the full force of French law against anyone acting on the Ayatollah's death threat.

[Siddiqi] Yes, but only after Geoffrey Howe and Margaret Thatcher had in fact gone out of their way to secure this kind of reaction—hard-lined reaction—from the French Government and other EEC governments. And I think the government here in Britain has the responsibility, really, to react now quickly to defuse the situation in order to give the Muslims some kind of reaction—sympathetic reaction—to the grave concern and the grave insult that they have suffered at the hands of this book and this author.

[MacCormick] Are you arguing, Dr Siddiqi, that the people who have already died round the world in this whole affair in some way justifies the killing of two Muslim clergymen in Brussels this evening?

[Siddiqi] Nothing ever justifies killing anybody, in my opinion. I think only a judge who passes a sentence of death—like Imam Khomeyni has done in this case—only these people are justified. Ordinary people like you and I cannot take any life and cannot pass death sentences. Neither can we, people like myself, for instance. I came on the radio straight away when I got back from Tehran to say that we, living in this country—British Muslims—cannot take the law into our hands and carry out the imam's sentence of death. That is for the imam to arrange—how he wants Salman Rushdie to be dealt with. We can only protest to the British Government, but unfortunately the British Government has taken the view that Muslims have a right to march, to shout, to protest, but they will not be listened to. The law will be used only to protect Salman Rushdie and his publishers.

[MacCormick] Can we come back, Dr Siddiqi, to the case in point tonight. It sounds from what you've just said as if you rather agree with the imam of the Brussels Mosque, because apparently, when he went on television and made certain remarks about this whole affair, what he said was that this death sentence could not be carried out in a democratic country, adding that every man had the right to defend himself before judges and, if necessary, to repent. Now if you agree with what the imam said, surely it is monstrous that the imam should have been shot for making these remarks.

[Siddiqi] I am absolutely sure that every Muslim would take that point of view. I have taken it, most responsible Muslim leaders in this country have taken this view. I've gone on television, radio programs, to say this and to calm down the Muslim community in this country. But the thing is that the reaction of the Muslims in this country to this book is of course very strong, and this the British Government has been very, very slow to recognize. It took Geoffrey Howe and Margaret Thatcher 2 weeks to realize that the book had offended the Muslims. They had not read it. They had not even got somebody to read it and advise them properly.

[MacCormick] Dr Siddiqi, thank you very much indeed.

Palestinian Affairs

AL-ITTIHAD: U.S.-PLO Dialogue 'Stormy'

JN3003143989 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 28 Mar 89 p 20

[Text] Washington/Arab capitals—AL-ITTIHAD can confirm that the latest round of the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue, held in Tunis last Wednesday, was stormy and the dialogue almost stopped because of a heated argument between a member of the Palestinian delegation and U.S. Ambassador Robert Pelletreau.

According to reports received by AL-ITTIHAD from several Arab capitals, the Palestinian delegation left at the end of the session with the impression that the U.S. Administration, which had really wanted to continue the dialogue with the PLO for what appeared to be suspect reasons, does not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and opposes the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and an international conference.

AL-ITTIHAD has learned that the Palestinian side seemed convinced that the United States' sole objective in the dialogue with the PLO was to suppress the intifadah [uprising] and gain time for the Israeli enemy.

During this second round, the U.S. stand did not register any progress. In fact, Ambassador Pelletreau said: "The time is not yet ripe for a settlement."

The session began with an exchange of welcoming speeches by the two sides. Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh began his speech by remarking that the second session of the dialogue takes place 1 year after the closure of the Palestinian information bureau in Washington.

The U.S. ambassador immediately opened fire by referring to fedayeen operations carried out by certain Palestinian organizations against Israel from Lebanese territory. He called on the PLO in its capacity as the party responsible for these organizations to put an end to these operations. The ambassador did not stop at that but also requested that the PLO take measures against the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

A member of the Palestinian delegation replied by saying that the United States does not recognize the Palestinian state, the right to self-determination, and the PLO with which it is negotiating. He also denounced the United States' absolute bias toward Israel and disregard for the Palestinians' most fundamental rights as well as its repeated use of the veto in the UN Security Council. He called on the United States to do much for the benefit of the Palestinian people to regain the confidence it has lost and to eliminate the Palestinians' feeling of suspicion and distrust toward it.

The U.S. delegation was surprised by the language and method used by the Palestinian member and Ambassador Pelletreau requested that the meeting be adjourned for some time.

The meeting was suspended at the request of the U.S. ambassador for 30 minutes, during which all expected the meeting never to be resumed or at least not on the same day. However, the two delegations resumed their meeting. The U.S. ambassador, who was carrying a 5-page report, began to brandish it, speaking emotionally and saying: "This is what we have done for you".

When tension was somewhat reduced, the U.S. ambassador took hold of Call No 36 issued by the Unified National Leadership of the Intifadah [uprising], began to read it aloud, and paused, stressing the word "Molotov." Then, he demanded that the use of Molotov cocktails and stones be stopped without using the word "intifadah."

The Palestinian delegation affirmed that these Molotov cocktails are no more than bottles containing some gasoline and that these Molotov cocktails, along with stones, cannot be compared to the Israeli war machine, the brutalities, Israel's use of toxic gases and live ammunition, house demolitions, and bone-breaking.

Afterward, the dialogue moved to some political aspects. The U.S. side stressed the need for the PLO to hold direct negotiations with Israel. The U.S. delegation also brought up the issue of holding elections in the occupied territories as well as opening a dialogue with Palestinian figures from the occupied territories.

During the heated argument at the beginning of the dialogue session, one member of the Palestinian delegation was suffering from a facial pain which developed into a swelling. The U.S. ambassador asked him if that were the result of a stonethrowing attack. The Palestinian delegation member answered: The stonethrowing childrer know their targets well.

AL-ITTIHAD has learned that Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat deliberately chose not to refer to the heated and tense atmosphere that prevailed during this dialogue session at the news conference he held 36 hours after the end of the session so as not to jeopardize the continuation of the dialogue on the one hand and to bring about confusion in U.S.-Israeli relations on the other.

'Arafat Attends Land Day Celebration in Tunis

LD3103101989 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 2200 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Excerpts] A meeting was held this evening at the Tunis Labor Exchange to commemorate Land Day and to honor the sons of the intifadah [uprising]. Present were Foreign Minister Abdelhamid Escheikh and Yasir 'Arafat, leader of the Palestinian revolution and head of the State of Palestine [as heard]. A number of ministers also were present, in addition to Mr 'Abd al-Hamid al-Sa'ih, speaker of the Palestine National Council [PNC], and several other Palestinian leaders, and members of the PLO Executive Committee. [passage omitted]

In this respect, 'Arafat said that Tunisia, where Palestinian and Tunisian blood were mingled, has become a state in confrontation with Israel in both word and deed. The Palestinian leader renewed his gratitude to President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, expressing his admiration for the foundations of freedom, democracy, and justice laid down in Tunisia, and praising the president's generosity in the service of the Arab cause and the Palestinian revolution.

Mr 'Arafat added: We are not fighting for the sake of war; we are fighting, rebelling, and resisting to achieve our people's political objective which is the establishment of national authority on every part of the Palestinian soil that is liberated or from which Israel withdraws.

The Palestinian leader then pointed to the change registered in the U.S. stand, thanks to the Palestinian steadfastness. He said at the end of his address: The generals of the stones have lifted the siege on the Palestinian revolution and have brought it out of the dark tunnel. He continued: We have come out of the bottleneck and are marching together toward victory. [passage omitted]

PLO Executive Committee Land Day Statement

JN3003170989 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1603 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Statement by the PLO Executive Committee on Land Day—date, place not given]

[Text] Today 13 years ago, our heroic Palestinian masses in the Galilee, Triangle, and Negev recorded a new glorious history for the Palestinian territory. Since then, 30 March is no longer an ordinary day in the life of our people but a pan-Arab anniversary celebrated by our people's masses inside and outside our occupied territory with further steadfastness on and defense of the land as well as further determination to continue to struggle until the land is liberated from occupation and our people succeed in realizing their national, inalienable rights to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of their independent state.

Land Day comes this year at a time when our people's great intifadah [uprising] is in its 16th month, shaking the land under the feet of occupiers in every camp, village, and city in our Palestinian land. This intifadah was the result of the accumulations and interactions of the stubborn revolutionary struggle waged by the Palestinian people in all places of residence. The Palestinian masses' rise on the first Land Day in 1976 was one of the salient features of this struggle. The revolution's steadfastness in Lebanon and its defense of the Palestinian existence and Palestinian identity against all obliteration and annihilation attempts were some of the reasons for the eruption of Palestinian wrath. Therefore, the revolution broke out in the homeland and the Palestinian struggle was integrated and united in defense of our people's sacred rights.

O masses of our great Palestinian people, Land Day this year is different from previous ones. It comes at a time when major accomplishments have been achieved for the Palestinian struggle, headed by the proclamation of the Palestinian state, the recognition of this state by more than 100 countries, the declaration of the Palestinian peace initiative, which is today enjoying worldwide support, the increasing world support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just struggle and national rights, and the mounting status of the PLO on Arab and international levels.

In contrast, Israel's isolation has intensified, its fascist and racist face has been exposed, and world condemnation of its crimes has increased. This has made the world's Jewish communities unable to defend Israel and its usurpation of Palestinian rights. Voices within Israeli society calling for evacuating the occupied Palestinian lands have also increased. All this has increased the Israeli rulers' impasse and has been influential in expanding the circle of differences among themselves.

O masses of our great people, all of these positive developments, which have been scored in favor of our national struggle, dictate that we make our celebration marking the Land Day anniversary this year a distinguished celebration to protect and develop these accomplishments, escalate the intifadah, and bolster national unity through further entrenchment of that unity and also through further rallying around the PLO, the leader of our people's struggle and their sole legitimate representative.

Such stands, when bolstered by an effective Arab solidarity, will confer further respect and support for our people's cause and their legitimate struggle. They will also pave the way for realizing the Palestinian peace program represented by Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, by placing the occupied territories under UN supervision for a definite period of time to pave the way for the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination and to establish their state on these territories and by convening an international Middle East peace conference under UN auspices with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, as well as the five permanent members of the UN Security Council to draw up arrangements and guarantees for security and peace in the region.

While affirming our peace program on Land Day, we seek to affirm that the realization of peace is the objective of our struggle and also that our people are waging their battle under the banner of peace and for the sake of realizing peace on the land of peace.

O sons of our great people; O you who are holding out on the soil of the homeland; O you who are defending the olive tree and the blossoms of orange and lemon trees; O you farmers who are cultivating in your good earth food for your children and women; O you who are holding the homeland's stones, using them to repulse the onslaught of the neo-Fascists; O you workers who are slapping the enemy in the face through your strike; O you students and teachers who have turned your schools and universities, whether open and closed, into institutes for graduating tough strugglers; O you steadfast and rebellious heroes in the occupation authorities' cells and jails; O you our heroic wounded, bearers of the decorations of

honor and heroism; O you great women of Palestine—mothers, sisters, and girls—who are producing generations of steadfastness and defiance; O you employees, merchants, craftsmen, and professionals; O you all sons of our people:

The hour of salvation has approached. Display further steadfastness, further struggle, and further national unity, as this will make us faithful to our sacred soil and righteous martyrs.

At a time when our Palestinian people announce their adherence to their Palestinian state and their sole legitimate representative, the PLO, under the leadership of brother Commander in Chief Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], our masses in the Triangle, the Negev, and Galilee declare their joining to the Palestinian struggle march through their celebration of and participation in Land Day so that the people will embrace their revolution and state on the wedding of immortal Land Day.

This occasion was born 13 years ago when our people in the Triangle, Galilee, and the Negev rushed to defend their holy land and right to a dignified life. On that day they declared their rejection of the policy of the Zionist military colonial establishment whose aim is to annex all the leftover land of our people to the Zionist settlements.

After the Zionist occupation managed in 1948 to scatter the Palestinian people, destroy their social, economic, and educational infra-structure, and occupy most of Palestine, building on its territory its entity known as Israel, a part of our Palestinian people remained steadfast in Palestine in their towns and villages, clung to their territory, and did not desert it despite the massacres committed against our people in Dayr Yasin. After the Zionist occupation stretched out its arm and occupied our Palestinian territory, in 1956 it committed the massacre of Kafr Qasim, whose aim was to push the rest of our people to emigrate and leave the homeland. But the wheel of Palestinian struggle continues to roll and the Palestinian revolution proceeds, with which the people's hope of freedom is born and our people's dream grows along with its growth.

Therefore, in the enemy's attempts to occupy the land, the enemy's government decided in a session in 1970 to implement political plans that it called the plans to develop Galilee and the Triangle. However, the essence of this political step aimed, in its core, at achieving two goals.

The first concerns the demographic factor of our people who are growing continuously in the Galilee. This is made the enemy leaders react to this increase publicly by pushing up the number of Zionist settlers into Galilee to Judaize it. The second focuses on occupying Palestinian territory that remained in the hands of the sons of Galilee and the Triangle and to annex it to the Zionist settlers despite the resonant calls for help and outcries of our people in defense of their land.

Therefore, more than 800,000 Palestinian citizens living in Galilee, the Triangle, and Negev in more than 50 cities, villages, and groupings are trying to assert themselves through building establishments that give them back part of their dignity and usurped rights. Moreover, the Zionist occupation authorities have followed a racist policy against our people in Galilee, the Triangle, and Negev, whether through giving them lower wages and longer working hours in comparison to their Israeli colleagues or through not covering the deficits of their local and municipal councils in comparison to the smallest municipal council of one of the occupation settlements.

Therefore, and for all these reasons, immortal Land Day was born and martyrs fell to water with their noble blood the tree of Palestine's liberty.

Reportage on Clashes, Casualties on Land Day

Strike, 'Disobedience' Urged

JN3003130089 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The Unified National Leadership of the Intifadah [uprising] has issued a statement calling on the inhabitants of the occupied territories to stage a general strike today and to carry out comprehensive [civil] disobedience on the occasion of Land Day. The statement urged those it called the inhabitants of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1948, that is, the Arabs who hold Israeli nationality, to double their efforts to support the intifadah and affirm their Palestinian identity.

Call No 37 Urges Clashes

JN3003181989 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1620 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The occupied homeland—A call issued by the Unified National Leadership in the land of occupied Palestine, which was distributed today in the Cypriot capital, Nicosia, calls on the Palestinian people to escalate their national struggle and to turn Land Day, which falls today, into [a day] of tempestuous anger, general strike, mammoth demonstrations, and fierce clashes that will shake the structure of the Zionist occupation off the land of Palestine.

Call No 37 issued on the occasion of Palestinian Land Day calls for refraining form participating in any fringe meetings which the pillars of the Zionist occupation try to arrange in an attempt to beautify the ugly face of the racist regime that sits heavily on the land of Palestine.

The call says the Unified Leadership asserts that any official or unofficial meeting or dialogue must be made on the basis of the PLO's sole representation and of abiding by the resolutions adopted by the Palestine National Council sessions, foremost of which are the rights to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of a Palestinian state on Palestinian national soil.

The call urges all masses of the Palestinian people to boycott and refrain from dealing with Zionist commodities. It permits the confiscation and destruction of these commodities and the pursuit of those who market or give them Arabic labels. The call prohibits the Palestinian people inside [Palestine] from working in Zionist settlements and calls on the national leaders in the occupied territories to tackle this matter. It also calls for the resignation of those who work in the organs of the Zionist civilian administration and the expropriation of the property and pursuit of those who did not resign.

The call authorizes the strike forces to confiscate and burn the tax forms issued by the Zionist government and close the offices of the accountants who deal in tax clearance for the Zionist authorities.

The Unified Leadership calls on the Palestinian people in the occupied territories to show commitment and discipline by respecting the work of the doctors and those who work in all hospitals and to allow them to carry out their national and humanitarian duty in full.

The call dedicates tomorrow, Friday, as a day for solidarity with and visits to the houses of the wounded, the parents of martyrs, and detainees. Saturday is devoted to broad mass marches, which everyone should attend. It devotes Sunday as a day for popular and home education on the occasion of the extension of the closure of schools in the occupied territories. Monday and Tuesday are devoted to organizational activities and support for the popular committees and strike forces.

The call asserts the need to devote next Wednesday as a day for practicing violent struggle against the occupation troops and for the use of knives, axes, and large stones from rooftops so we can teach the enemy that it will not escape the punishment of history and the people.

The call asserts that the projects and liquidatory schemes that will be carried out by the terrorist, Yitzhaq Shamir, on his forthcoming visit to the United States will be broken on the rock of our people, just as all previous liquidatory schemes have been broken.

The call states that the Unified Leadership calls on the United States—if it really wants to become competent to play a role in solving the Palestine question—to stop procrastinating in convening a fully authorized international conference as a logical framework for solving the Middle East problem.

Al-Shuwaykah Curfew Imposed

JN3003133589 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1320 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Brother strugglers: We have just received the following: The American-Zionist enemy forces imposed a curfew on the steadfast Al-Shuwaykah suburb north of Tulkarm at 1310 following the large-scale encounters witnessed by the suburb. Our correspondent reported several casualties, but the names of the wounded are still unknown.

Clashes in Hebron District

JN3003135289 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1333 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Brother strugglers: We have just received the following: The American-Zionist enemy forces stormed the steadfast villages of Sa'ir and Al-Shayyukh, Hebron District, at noon today. The villages turned into arenas of wide confrontations when the revolutionaries of the intifadah [uprising] confronted the Zionist enemies, hurled stones at them, placed stone barriers in their way, and set fire to car tires. The soldiers of the American-Zionist enemy fired live and rubber bullets and tear gas bombs.

'Violent Clashes' in Bethlehem

JN3003135989 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1323 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Brother strugglers: We have just received the following: Large-scale violent clashes erupted in the village of Husan in the Bethlehem district this afternoon. Our correspondent reports that the enemy forces fired gunshots at youths, wounding several. Later, the Zionist enemy forces encircled the village, set up military roadblocks at its entrances, and prevented ambulances from entering to evacuate the wounded.

Large-scale violent clashes are now taking place in the Al-Dawhah suburb in Bayt Jala near the house of martyr 'Abd al-'Aziz Naji 'Abdallah, 34. Our correspondent says the enemy forces kidnapped the martyr's body and took it to the Abu Kabir institute. The enemy forces also arrested 'Adnan Naji 'Abdallah, the martyr's brother.

In another development, the Zionist enemy forces stormed all of Bayt Sahur's suburbs, broke into houses, and forced the citizens to remove slogans under the the threat of arms and beatings. Among the stormed houses were those belonging to Hanna al-Hawwash, Sami Iskandar Abu Sa'dah, Wadi' Abu 'Aytah, 'Isa Saliba Bannurah, and Mikha'il Ishaq 'Awwad. Among the beaten youths were Tariq Habbas 'Awdah, 19; Ihab Nasr Abu Sa'dah, 16; and Ra'id Qustah Sa'd, 19. The hero youths are pursuing the Zionist enemy soldiers and pelting them with stones and empty bottles, especially in the municipality area in Bayt Sahur.

Our correspondent says the Zionist forces beat up Ghassan al-Shumali, 18. Gunshots are being heard in all parts of Bayt Sahur.

Vehicles in Qalqilyah Stoned

JN3003140189 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1337 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Brother strugglers: We have just received the following: The brave men of 'Azzun village, Qalqilyah District, this afternoon attacked two vehicles belonging to Zionist settlers at the western entrance of the village and succeeded in smashing their glass. The stones of the revolutionaries also fell on two other vehicles belonging to Zionist settlers at the eastern entrance this afternoon also.

'Fierce Clashes' in Jerusalem

JN3003140589 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1326 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Brother strugglers: We have just received the following:

Fierce clashes are now taking place in most of the Jerusalem districts and nearby camps. These clashes started at 1330. Our correspondent advises that one of our militants was injured and was immediately arrested.

Our correspondent adds that clashes are taking place now in Shaykh Sa'd district, Jabal al-Mukabbir, Abu Dis town, Qalandiyah camp, and Al-Ram town. Burned tires are seen in the streets and clouds of smoke cover the sky over the city.

Our valiant militants hurled stones and empty bottles at the American-Zionist troops. The American-Zionists responded by firing live ammunition and gas canisters. One of our militants was badly injured. However, his name is not known yet.

Clashes in Nabulus Reported

JN3003142589 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1341 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Brother strugglers: We have just received the following: At 1330 today violent confrontations erupted in the old city of Nabulus, as well as on Hittin Street, Rafidiyah district, 24th Street, and Ra's al-'Ayn district in the city. The heroic youths burned tires and stoned the patrols of the Zionist-American enemy. Clashes are still continuing.

Our correspondent has learned that the heroic martyr who fell yesterday at the village of Salfit in Nabulus district is 'Abd al-Mun'im Yusuf 'Abdallah, age 20. Our correspondent says the body of the heroic martyr was riddled with several bullets and that enemy soldiers ordered the car carrying him to a hospital near Jamma'in to stop.

Meanwhile, citizen Salih al-Na'ur, 52 years old, from Balatah camp, sustained several bruises after he was attacked by the Zionist-American enemy troops, who also ransacked his house at the camp, which remains under curfew for the 2d consecutive day.

On the other hand, the Zionist-American enemy forces this morning called two youths from Balatah camp to the office of the so-called military ruler. The two youths are Duhman Jibril al-Huwaysi, age 24, and Riyadh 'Abdallah al-Masihi, 22. The Zionist-American enemy soldiers began to interrogate them.

Youth 'Seriously Wounded'

JN3003174689 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1630 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Brother strugglers: We have just received the following: At 1710 today, the Qal'at Shuqayf district in Bayt Sahur witnessed large-scale confrontations near the municipality building. During these confrontations, the American-Zionists fired gunshots, wounding many youths. One of the youths was seriously wounded in his chest. The name of this youth is not known yet.

2 Palestinians Shot Dead

JN3003184889 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1733 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Brother strugglers: We have just received the following: In confirmation of the love of the land on Land Day, two hero martyrs ascended to heaven. They would have nothing but to be implanted in the womb of the benevolent land on Land Day.

The first is hero martyr Nasr Khalid Nasr, 24, from the struggling camp of Jabalyah in Gaza. He received a gunshot in the chest—a chest that is abounding with love for Palestine—during the violent encounters in the steadfast camp. Our correspondent reported that our struggling kinfolk are now bidding farewell to our hero martyr amid a tumultuous popular agitation.

The second martyr is hero Muhammad Mansur 'Abd Rabbuh, 23, from the valiant village of Al-Jib northwest of our capital Jerusalem. He fulfilled the call of God and Palestine and was martyred after being shot in the heart—a heart throbbing with love for Palestine—during the large-scale and honorable confrontations in the village.

Our correspondent added that extensive violent clashes erupted this evening and are continuing in all parts of the valiant West Bank and Gaza Strip. These clashes are escalating and spreading from one area to another, from one camp to another, and from one city to another. Scores of our strugglers were wounded by the Zionist-Nazi bullets of hatred in the valiant camp of Qalandiyah north of our capital Jerusalem, which is now witnessing the most violent clashes, and in the Al-Am'ari camp south of Ramallah, in the struggling Qaddurah camp near Ramallah, in Bethlehem, Bayt Sahur, and Janin—the Palestinian triangle of terror.

Seven of our hero strugglers were seriously wounded. Among them was 'Abdallah Zaydan 'Arafat, 23, from the village of Al-Fir'awn south of Tulkarm, where most violent clashes are taking place. He received a bullet in the stomach.

High tension is now prevailing in all parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip at a time when a state of maximum emergency has been declared in most hospitals due to the large number of casualties.

Mahmud 'Abbas Reportedly To Replace Qaddumi

JN3003170289 Kuwait AL-SIYASAH in Arabic 29 Mar 89 p 1, 20

[Text] Amman—AL-SIYASAH has learned that the PLO Central Council will hold a meeting in Baghdad on Friday to issue a new authorization to the PLO leadership to continue the present political course aimed at expanding the Palestinian-American and Palestinian-Israeli dialogues. The call for convening the PLO Central Council, which in terms of legitimacy is considered a link between the Palestine National Council [PNC] and the PLO Executive Committee, came from the Fatah Movement. Fatah wants to affirm that the PLO Executive Committee is implementing the PNC resolutions adopted in the intifadah [uprising] session in Algiers.

The PLO Central Council will convene while the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], which participated in the PNC session, are largely condemning and denouncing the course of Palestinian-American dialogue as well as Palestinian-Israeli contacts.

Recently, DFLP Secretary General Nayif Hawatimah issued from his headquarters in Damascus a statement that is considered a response to and rejection of the statement issued by his deputy in the DFLP, 'Abd Rabbuh, in the name of the PLO Executive Committee, on the second round of talks between the PLO and the American ambassador in Tunis. This is in addition to the fact that the PFLP and the DFLP as well as other Palestinian factions within the rejectionist front carried out military operations against Israel in southern Lebanon within the framework of what has become known as a protest to the policy engineered by Yasir 'Arafat—the policy based on embarking on a diplomatic offensive to open gaps in the American and Israeli stands.

Well informed sources said that Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, no longer hides his public opposition to the course of the PLO leadership in wagering on the American stand and on the possibility of developing and changing the Israeli stand through overt and covert negotiations. The sources added that Qaddumi's opposition to the PLO's recognition of Resolution No 242 was clear in the recent PNC session in Algiers.

However, the gap between the stands of 'Arafat and Qaddumi has deepened recently to the extent that there is public talk on the possibility that Qaddumi will leave or be removed from the PLO Executive Committee and that Abu Mazin, alias Mahmud 'Abbas, will be in charge of the PLO Political Department.

The assessment is that all these stands will be discussed by the PLO Central Council in Baghdad on Friday. All Palestinian circles hope this meeting will not affect the internal unity of the Palestinian stand as entrenched in the Algiers session

OPEC Affairs

Sobroto Says Ministerial Meeting 'Very Positive'

LD3003185289 Vienna OPECNA in English 1807 GMT 30 Mar 89

[By Ali al-Khazraji]

[Text] Vienna, 30 Mar. 89 (OPECNA)—OPEC Secretary General Dr Subroto has described the two-day ministerial monitoring committee meeting which ended today as "very positive".

He said between now and June, when the full OPEC ministerial conference was due to take place, intensive contacts would take place between OPEC ministers, and "if we see any need for a meeting or feel that it is necessary, then one will take place."

Asked about the adherence of OPEC member countries to the November output accord, he said, "It is the good intention of everybody to adhere very strictly to the November accord, particularly in the second quarter. We have received a telex from the United Arab Emirates saying that its production has been decreasing and in March it would be around 850,000 b/d [barrels per day]. The United Arab Emirates' OPEC production quota under the November accord is 988,000 b/d."

The secretary general said, "Every country expressed its willingness and everybody does adhere to the accord. Topics of discussion that need to be elaborated have been discussed intensively."

Asked if there was any decision taken regarding a meeting between OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers, Subroto said the matter was under study and the committee appreciated the willingness and readiness of non-OPEC producers to reduce their exports during the second quarter and "we are going to study the possibility of a meeting and fix the date and the place."

He added, "We are not limiting outselves to the short term, but we are looking at things in the longer term and this certainly was one of the topics that was touched upon and discussed by the committee."

Subroto said demand in the second half of the year would increase, but as for the second quarter, "We do not know for certain, but usually there is a slight reduction in demand."

He confirmed that the proposed OPEC summit was one of the items discussed by the eight ministers.

Subroto said, "We discussed the possible behaviour of the price in the coming period and the second quarter of 1989. These are the topics that were touched upon and we will continue to monitor production and seek information."

Asked whether the committee discussed quotas, he said it was "one of the many things that we looked upon without going into specifics this time."

The OPEC ministerial Monitoring Committee, set up by the OPEC Conference of Ministers in November 1988, consists of Algeria, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.

OAPEC on Natural Gas, Crude Oil Reserves

JN2203162089 Manama WAKH in English 1516 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Kuwait, March 22 (GNA)—The UAE owns the largest natural gas reserves among Arab states whose reserves totalled 24,343 billion cubic metres in 1988, representing 21.5 percent of the world reserves at 113,176 billion cubic meters, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) said.

In a report on Arab natural gas reserves in 1988, it said the UAE's reserves reached 5,706 billion cubic meters followed by Saudi Araia at 5,195 billion cubic meters and Qatar at 4,437 cubic meters.

Algeria banked fourth with reserves at 3,234 billion cubic meters followed by Iraq at 2,690 billion cubic meters, Kuwait 1,378 billion cubic meters, Libya 827 billion cubic meters, Syria [figure indistinct] billion cubic meters, Egypt 325 billion cubic meters, Bahrain 190 billion cubic meters and Tunisia 88 billion cubic meters, the report added.

It said members' natural gas reserves increased from 21,377 billion cubic meters in 1987 to 24,343 billion cubic meters in 1988 with its share in world reserves rising from 19.9 percent to 21.5 percent.

The report said this rise is basically due to a significant increase in Saudi Arabia's natural gas reserves which soared from 2,999 billion cubic meters in 1987 to 5,195 billion cubic meters in 1988.

During the same period Iraqi's reserves also increased from 1,416 billion cubic meters to 2,690 billion cubic meters, the report said.

Concerning Arab crude, it said reserves increased from 502.84 billion barrels in 1987 to 589.9 billion in 1988. This boosted Arab share in world oil from 56.6 percent in 1987 to 59.5 percent in 1988, the report said.

It attributed the increase to a rise in Saudi Arabia's reserves which, according to ARAMCO estimates, went up from 169.6 billion barrels in 1987 to 255 billion in 1988.

The report said the reserves of OAPEC'S other members in 1988 were as follows: The UAE—98.1 billion barrels; Bahrain—140 million barrels; Tunisia—1.8 billion barrels; Algeria—8.5 billion barrels; Syria—1.75 billion barrels; Iraq—100 billion barrels; Qatar—3.15 billion barrels; Kuwait—94.5 billion barrels; Libya—21 billion barrels; and Egypt—4.3 billion barrels.

Algeria

FLN Central Committee Proceedings Continue

Draft Resolutions on Congress

LD2903231289 Algiers Television Service in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] The proceedings of the National Liberation Front [FLN] Central Committee's extraordinary meeting continued today in two camera sessions. The first was held in the morning and the second this afternoon. The two sessions were devoted to continuing the open debate aimed at evaluating the general situation in the country and defining the horizons for the future in light of the current period's requirements.

The afternoon session was followed at 1800 by an evening session which was chaired by President Chadli Bendjedid, chairman of the FLN and president of the Republic. During the later session, the Central Committee members heard two draft resolutions dealing with the establishment of a preparatory committee for the forthcoming FLN extraordinary congress and this session's political statement.

The first draft resolution, which deals with the establishment of a preparatory committee for the forthcoming congress, reads as follows:

The FLN Central Committee, which was convened at an extraordinary session on 28-29 March 1989 at the Pines Club;

Having heard the speech by brother struggler Chadli Bendjedid, chairman of the FLN and president of the Republic, assessing and analyzing the situation;

Having heard the report of the brother struggler the secretary general of the FLN Central Committee;

Proceeding from the recommendations of the Sixth FLN Congress, particularly those concerning the renewal of organs at all levels in accordance with the statute promulgated by the sixth congress as well as the convening of the FLN extraordinary congress;

The Central Committee decides the following:

1. An FLN extraordinary congress will be convened. The date will be set by the Central Committee at the end of its extraordinary meeting.

2. A preparatory committee composed of Central Committee members will be established to prepare the political program of the FLN as well as the organizational procedures for convening the extraordinary meeting and to supervize the election of delegates to the congress. The preparatory committee should send its reports to the Central Committee for approval.

3. The Central Committee calls upon FLN members in all positions and at all levels to mobilize themselves in order to effectively participate in the preparation and the successful outcome of this congress.

4. The Central Committee's current extraordinary meeting will continue until it approves the reports of the preparatory committee. The latter will take into account the ideas and proposals of the grass roots.

The draft political statement said in part that the FLN Central Committee, which has convened an extraordinary session to assess the general situation in the country and define the prospects for the future in light of the requirements of the current stage, and after listening to the important speech of the president of the FLN and the horizons of its work, will record this speech as a basic document for the work of the FLN in its preparations for the congress.

The country is going through a crucial period as a result of political developments resulting from the continuous economic, social, and cultural transformations whose effects are embraced by most citizens, in response to economic difficulties imposed by the international economic environment, and as a result of the developments of running the society economically, politically, socially, and culturally.

In this situation, the FLN bears a special responsibility as a vanguard that leads society toward economic, social, and cultural advancement and as an effective force in all the transformations and political mobilization of the nation. The Central Committee's evaluation of the political state since the sixth congress, in which the overall political and economic reforms were approved, makes us deeply aware of the historical and dynamic role which the FLN must shoulder in this crucial stage. Through its awareness of its responsibilities, the legitimacy of its options, and the correctness of its political line and out of its support for the entrenched traditions of defending the interests of the national community and the popular aspirations of social justice via the socialist option.

The situation today requires that all members—men and women—carry out a stringent assessment of our march and draw up an accurate and decisive plan. Thus we will be more capable of undertaking all the current political and economic reforms which were approved by the congress and of facing all the basic issues which are confronting society.

The political program options chosen will be clarified by FLN members, organizations, and unions in preparation for the extraordinary congress. They must emanate from the principles and the spirit of the 1 November revolution and from the basic principles and choices of the country embodied in the national charter.

The FLN is resolved to continue its historical mission through the will of its members to entrench democracy within its internal structure. It strives to be a pioneering and basic force in the political dialogue and mobilize all the dynamic energies of the nation, to continue the country's development within the framework of broad democratic practices, the freedom of expression, and the broadening of national political action.

The Central Committee calls on the members of the FLN to enlist and mobilize themselves in all positions to continue their mission, and it calls on the dynamic forces which believe in progress to rally around the Front for the sake of the development battle and of defending the interests of the nation. The mass organizations and scientific and vocational unions should bring their work methods in harmony with the current transformations. They must work under the shadow of clarity so that they can preserve their credibility and continue the dynamism of progress. They must remain an effective force in the political life of the nation, find organized reactions to maintain control of events and direct them in a way that guarantees the success of political reforms, realizes social reassurances and the true victory of democracy. They should block maneuvers which seek to mislead public opinion for the purpose of distorting the social climate and hampering the progress of the economy and public services.

Society today has the right to expect us and others to organize our programs and record them clearly and confidently within the framework of political reforms, and realize that our duty is to defend the supreme interests of the nation and its basic foundations represented in Islam—language, national unity, national independence, and social justice—along with responsibly meeting the requirements of the new society.

The Central Committee lauds the firm stands of the National People's Army and it salutes the resolution adopted by the senior officers requesting to be excluded from the Central Committee in implementing the Constitution. The National People's Army will remain at the service of the country in defending national sovereignty, national unity, and the safety of our nation's soil.

A number of Central Committee members put forward several proposals to enrich these two documents and both were approved, namely, the formation of an ad hoc committee to prepare for the extraordinary congress and the political statement.

Thus, the evening meeting of the FLN Central Committee extraordinary session ended. The session will continue until its approves the reports of the ad hoc committee.

Mehri on Political Declaration

LD3003121389 Algiers APS in English 1015 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Algiers, 30/3/89 (APS)—At the end of the works of the extraordinary session of the Central Committee, Abdelhamid Mehri, secretary general of the Central Committee, assessed in a press conference the results of the first part of this session which will remain open until the end of the works of the preparatory commission of the extraordinary congress of the FLN [National Liberation Front].

Concerning the political declaration, Mehri said it reaffirms the will of the FLN to fully assume its historical responsibilities and its place in the political life while remaining very attached to democracy. It also reaffirms that the FLN gathers all the forces and energies of the country and constitutes a call to militants to make concrete proposals for the future political program of the FLN.

Mehri said this session will also add to the works done by the FLN. Mehri added that the FLN reaffirmed in the 6th congress that it remained open to pluralism.

Congress To Be Held 28-29 May

LD3003121889 Algiers APS in English 1017 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Algiers, 30/3/89 (APS)—The National Liberation Front will hold an extraordinary congress, the Central Committee which met here on May 28 and 29 decided. In this context, and on the basis of proposals from militants, a commission was set up to prepare a draft political programme of the Front and take organizational measures for holding of this congress whose date will be fixed later by the Central Committee which maintains its present session open until the end of the works of the preparation commission.

New Political Party Formed; Platform Outlined

LD3003201989 Algiers Domestic Service in French 1800 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] A new association of a political nature, called the Union of the Forces for Progress [Union des Forces pour le Progres], UFP, came into being during a meeting was held this morning at the Safir Hotel in Algiers.

While waiting for its program to be drawn up, the association proposes, according to its founders, to work for the reinstatement of freedoms and democracy in all spheres of political, economic and social life; to work to raise the moral standards of the state and its institutions; to work for a real state based on law; to assert itself as a political force attached to the values of Islam, the religion of the people; to work for the rehabilitation of man and the citizen; and finally to work for a progressive national private sector to be brought back into favor side by side with a strategic public sector.

Egypt

'Reshuffle' Expected After Mubarak's U.S. Visit

JN3103104389 Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 29 Mar 89 p 23

[By Ahmad Rajab in Cairo]

[Text] AL-WATAN has learned that a cabinet reshuffle will be made after Mubarak returns from his coming visit to Washington. Reports affirm that the cabinet

reshuffle will basically relieve Dr 'Atif Sidqi from the post of prime minister. Dr Yusuf Wali is one of the most prominent candidates for the prime minister's post. The reshuffle will also relieve Zaki Badr, the present interior minister, from his post and appoint Major General Sami Khudayr, governor of the city of Port Said, as interior minister.

4th Round of Talks With Saudis Open 30 Mar

NC3003123089 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1141 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—A fourth round of Egyptian-Saudi political talks was held at the Foreign Ministry headquarters this morning. Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid led the Egyptian side to the talks and Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal led the Saudi side. The talks dealt with bilateral relations and views on international, Arab, and Islamic issues.

Attending on behalf of Egypt were Sayyid Qasim al-Masri, Egypt's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Ambassador Husayn Hassunah, director of the Foreign Minister's Office, and Counselor Hilmi Budayr, staff member of the Foreign Minister's Office. Present on the Saudi side were As'ad Abu al-Nasr, Saudi Ambassador in Cairo, and Isma'il al-Shuqayri, Foreign Ministry undersecretary. The other three rounds of talks were held in Cairo, Ismailia, and Alexandria.

Further on Talks

NC3003143789 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1230 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] A third round [as heard] of Egyptian-Saudi talks was held at the Foreign Ministry today by Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal. Both parties completed their discussions of the latest developments in the Palestinian issue and made a comprehensive assessment of the situation before president Husni Mubarak's visit to the United States.

The talks affirmed both countries' identity of views on all the issues discussed. Both parties agreed to continue contacts, consultations, and coordination on Middle East developments.

King Fahd Meets With Newsmen

NC3003210089 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1845 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia held a meeting with the chairmen of the board and chief editors of Egyptian newspapers this evening. During the 2-hour meeting, King Fahd answered all the questions posed to him.

King Fahd said that he and President Mubarak had discussed cooperation between their countries in all domains. They especially discussed economic cooperation, whether directly between the two countries or between the two private sectors. They also discussed aspects of economic cooperation.

During the meeting, King Fahd said: I do not want to reveal what we will do in the future. As we have noted from his speeches to the Egyptian people, President Mubarak does not speak about any achievement unless he is sure it will be implemented soon. He added: Neither President Mubarak nor I personally need any propaganda. The Arab and Saudi people also do not need any propaganda. We will let matters speak for themselves.

King Fahd discussed the efforts being made to purify the Arab atmosphere, the preparations for the Arab summit conference, his recent meeting with Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, and his earlier meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad.

King Fahd said: I had met before with President Hafiz al-Asad, who showed an understanding of the Lebanese issue. I felt that he truly wants the problem to be solved according to the wishes of the Lebanese people.

He added: I did not deal with Iraqi-Syrian relations in particular during my meeting with him. But frankly speaking, I sensed a desire to find solutions to all the Arab problems in the interest of the Arab nation. This is what I felt from Hafiz al-Asad and Saddam Husayn. However, I cannot say that I delved deeply into the causes of the problems between them, which are ordinary differences. There are no deep differences between them.

King Fahd said that an ordinary Arab summit conference is scheduled to be held in Saudi Arabia. He stressed that the date of this conference will be discussed with the Arab brothers, including Egypt, after the month of Ramadan. He added that this does not prevent the convening of an urgent Arab summit conference if the need arises. He stressed that Egypt will attend any future Arab summit conference.

King Fahd said: We will discuss all matters with our brothers in the Arab League, including the new topics for the agenda. He noted that the Arab summits have become necessary, especially as it has been noticed that the role of the Arab League has been insufficient recently.

He stressed the need for the Arab League to remain the framework which unites the Arab nation. He also stressed the need to amend some of the Arab League bylaws.

On cooperation between the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC], and the Arab Maghreb Union Council, King Fahd said that their establishment is a good thing. Each council was established for certain social and economic reasons. For instance, the Gulf states have many features in common.

He said that the ACC is a useful and constructive grouping. He noted that homogeneity between these three councils must be within the Arab League framework. The Arab League must be the recipient of any proposals for cooperation between these councils.

On Egyptian and Saudi views of the Palestinian problem, King Fahd said: There are no differences in our views. We Arabs only want justice and fairness. We do not want more than our legitimate rights concerning the Palestinian cause.

He added: I feel happy now because of the international understanding we feel on the part of the United States, the European counties, and the Eastern Bloc countries toward the Palestinian issue. The five permanent members of the Security Council currently welcome their participation in solving the issue, and it only remains for them to follow the course of justice and fairness.

On the Iraq-Iran war, King Fahd said: I can speak about one side, Iraq, which has a sincere desire for peace. Iraq does not want more than its legitimate rights. He indicated that Iran has accepted the UN Security Council resolution, and this means a desire to end the state of war. There are differences on some matters, but we must arrive at a result. It is not in the interest of anyone for problems to exist in our region.

His majesty noted that naval straits among states must be open for all states. He said that the Egyptian people and leaders wisely enough long ago declared the Suez Canal an international waterway although it traverses Egyptian territory, its two banks are in Egyptian territory, and it was built by the Egyptians themselves. His Majesty noted that the Strait of Hormuz must be an international waterway.

King Fahd said that Iran has huge resources, such as oil, minerals, and agriculture, and that it does not need other things. What Iran in fact needs is regional stability.

King Fahd expressed hope that this problem will end because it is of concern to all. It is also of concern to Egypt despite its distance from Iraq and Iran, but its heart and people are with us. He stressed that President Mubarak is doing his utmost for a solution to the Iraq-Iran problem.

Regarding King Fahd's view of the new U.S. Administration, he said: I have known U.S. President George Bush for nearly 15 years. I know fully that he is intellectual and farsighted. He has done important work and has spent not a short time in the White House. I believe he is among the best men who could run the United States. He spares no efforts to end Middle East problems.

King Fahd then said: The U.S.-Soviet summits have shown that the world has begun moving toward solving all problems. Soviet President Gorbachev thinks of his country's interests. The changes he has made in the unworkable systems of the Soviet Union will undoubtedly reflect positively on the life of the Soviet people. Among the important decisions made by Gorbachev is the withdrawal from Afghanistan. The original decisions there were a mistake.

His majesty noted that the Arab states of the Middle East must have excellent relations with the United States, Europe, the Soviet Union, and the socialist countries.

His majesty was asked whether the newly formed Arab councils can succeed in freeing Arab men from foreign control. King Fahd said: For many years, the Arab countries were under the hegemony of foreign imperialism. Nowadays there is no hegemony, but instead a friendship has developed between the Arab countries and these foreign states, he said. There is no problem with these states which previously occupied our homelands. Even America itself had been a British colony, he remarked.

On cooperation between defense production institutions in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the King said: I think that Egypt has potential and great human resources. As for Saudi Arabia, he said, I cannot say that it has reached the aspired standard. What I have seen of the Egyptian rennaissance in the various fields, like tunnels, gardens, and highways, is magnificent, he said. The Egyptian Government is certainly making a great effort; it will take sufficient time to bring about a comprehensive development, he said.

The king said: I think that Arab countries can complement each other in the various sectors of industry. For instance, he said, if Saudi Arabia can finance a certain project in the agricultural sector in a country, and this project produces material needed in Saudi Arabia, we have no objection to that. He stressed the need for integrated distribution of industry on the Arab level.

King Fahd said that after he had seen the progress achieved in Egypt, he asked President Mubarak if he could visit Egypt again, provided the visit would be unofficial.

Regarding Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah's declaration before the United Nations concerning the debt issue and Saudi Arabia's views on this question, King Fahd said that Shaykh Jabir's remarks are wise. He noted that France is currently endorsing such an attitude. He added: In my view, the problem is confined to the debt interests. Should it be possible for the international funds and the rich countries to consider exempting debtor countries from half the interest payments and freezing the other half, we would be the first to welcome this. He noted that French President Mitterrand will hold a meeting with a number of the great powers' leaders to study how to reduce debts of the debtor countries.

On the issue of Arab League decisions' needing to be unanimous and the shortcomings this causes in Arab League actions, His Majesty King Fahd said that several issues related to the Arab League were discussed. It was said that the Arab League regulations must now be amended and that there is consensus on amending the bylaws.

On Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's statement that Saudi Arabia will finance the rebuilding of the Iraqi nuclear plant, King Fahd said that King Khalid, may God have mercy on his soul, had expressed Saudi Arabia's desire and preparedness to participate in rebuilding the plant after its destruction. This did not mean establishing a plant to produce nuclear weapons. The Iraqi plant can be established under international supervision. He noted that when Saudi Arabia wanted to help Iraq, it did not mean to help it produce atomic arms but to establish a plant to serve civilians. He added: "I am opposed to the establishment of any nuclear projects for combat purposes."

Regarding cooperation between Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the investment field, King Fahd said that the foreign ministers from both countries will sign a joint communique tomorrow outlining all the details about how Saudi Arabia can benefit from Egypt and vice versa. Joint organizations will be established in the future to serve both Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

King Fahd went on to say that Egypt is rich with men who are intellectual and farsighted. Asked about his impression regarding the popular reception accorded him in Egypt, the custodian of the two holy mosques said: Never in my life have I seen receptions like those the Egyptian people accorded me in Alexandria yesterday, along the highway from Cairo to Alexandria, in Ismilia, and in Cairo. He said that this was a reception from the hospitable Egyptian people and a rallying by the citizens around their president to welcome Egypt's guest. He said: I have promised President Mubarak to come to Egypt again on an unofficial visit.

MENA Reports Communique

NC3103103589 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0920 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 31 Mar (MENA)—The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has emphasized that the presence of Egypt within the Arab community [majmu'ah] gives indispensable support to effective common Arab action and consolidates the march of solidarity to serve the supreme Arab interests.

In a joint communique issued at the conclusion of the official visit to Egypt by the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia, the two sides voiced their continued support for the intifadah [uprising] of the struggling Palestinian people in the occupied territories, which reflects this people's determination to achieve their legitimate national rights.

The two sides stressed that an international peace conference convened under the aegis of the United Nations and in the presence of the Security Council's five permanent members as well as all the parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing is the formula acceptable by the international community to achieve a comprehensive, just, and durable peace in the Middle East. Following is the text of the Egyptian-Saudi joint communique:

Proceeding from the firm and deep-rooted relations and the close fraternal ties, in a bid to strengthen the unity of the Arab ranks and promote the march for inter-Arab cooperation and solidarity, reflecting the serious and objective political will of both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Arab Republic of Egypt, and in response to an invitation from President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt, King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, the custodian of the two holy mosques, paid an official visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt from 20 to 24 Sha'ban of the hegira year of 1409, corresponding to 27 to 31 March 1989.

During his stay in Egypt, the custodian of the two holy mosques was accorded an overwhelming reception that sincerely reflected the genuine, deep-rooted, and historical ties between the two fraternal peoples and countries, as well as the extremely cordial feelings and appreciation harbored by the president, government, and people of the Arab Republic of Egypt for the monarch, government, and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Within an atmosphere of genuine fraternity, full understanding, and eagerness to promote Arab solidarity in general and close bilateral relations in particular, the two Arab leaders, in a spirit of full and mutual confidence, held a discussion in which they expressed identical views on all the subjects under discussion, and in which a number of senior officials from the two countries participated.

The Egyptian side lauded the efforts being exerted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the supervision of the custodian of the two holy mosques, to clear the Arab atmosphere, promote Arab solidarity, and defend the just Arab and Islamic causes. In this domain, the Egyptian side commended Saudi Arabia's wise and firm policy in handling these various issues. The Saudi side emphasized that the presence of Egypt within the Arab community gives indispensable support to effective common Arab action and consolidates the march of solidarity to serve supreme Arab interests.

The two sides voiced their continued support for the intifadah of the struggling Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories, which reflects this people's determination to achieve their legitimate national rights. They also declared their support for the resolutions issued by the Palestine National Council held in Algiers, as well as the proclamation of the independent Palestinian state in November 1988. The two sides stressed that the positive developments in the Palestinian position

represent a unique opportunity that must be utilized in order to reach a peaceful, just, and durable settlement of the conflict in the region, in light of the international support for and sympathy with the establishment of the Palestinian state.

The two sides also stated that convening an international peace conference under UN auspices to be attended by the five permanent member states of the UN Security Council and all the parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal basis, is the formula acceptable to the international community to achieve a permanent, just, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The two sides denounced Israel's inhuman practices and disregard for the legitimate aspirations and rights of the struggling Palestinian people.

The two sides reviewed recent developments in Lebanon and expressed deep regret over the resumption of the fighting and clashes. They affirmed their support and backing for the efforts of the Arab six-member committee, which aims at preparing the atmosphere to enable the Lebanese constitutional institutions to exercise their role and to assist the parties to reach an agreement that would achieve security and stability in Lebanon. The two sides appeal to all warring parties to stop fighting and stop whatever aggravates the security situation.

The two sides expressed satisfaction with the end of the Iraq-Iran war and their hope that the two sides will reach a permanent, just, and peaceful settlement through negotiations to restore security and stability to the two countries and the region and to enable Iraq and Iran to devote efforts to development and reconstruction. The two sides also declared their support for the UN secretary general's efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolution 598.

The two sides expressed satisfaction with the recent developments in fraternal Sudan and their hope for a solution to all problems and obstacles standing in the way of stability in Sudan within the framework of national unity.

The two sides also reviewed the recent developments in the Arab arena represented by the establishment of the Arab Cooperation Council and the Union of the Maghreb states, which together with the Gulf Cooperation Council constitute a step toward the mobilization of resources in line with the Arab League Charter and the realization of its noble aims.

Servant of the two holy mosques, King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, expressed his pleasure at the auspicious occasion on which his visit to Egypt took place; that is, the completion of the liberation of Egyptian national soil. He extended his warm congratulations to his brother President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and the government and dear people of Egypt on the return of Tabah to Egyptian sovereignty.

President Muhammad Husni Mubarak paid tribute to the important role played by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia within the Islamic Conference Organization [ICO], as well as its prominent contribution toward creating an appropriate atmosphere to ensure the success of the ICO foreign ministers' meeting recently held in Riyadh. His excellency praised the incessant efforts of the custodian of the two holy mosques to preserve, expand, and renovate the Islamic sanctities and provide all facilities for the Muslims to perform their rites.

The two sides noted that the withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan heralds the beginning of a final solution to the problem existing in a fraternal Islamic and nonaligned state. They expressed hope that the struggle of the Afghan mujahidin will culminate with the achievement of their legitimate goals and the preservation of Afghanistan's independence and national unity without foreign intervention. The two sides expressed satisfaction that the Afghan mujahidin had taken Afghanistan's seat within the ICO.

Within the domain of international relations, the two sides expressed great satisfaction with the signs of relaxation prevailing in international relations. They voiced the hope this will eventually eliminate various hotbeds, lead to resolving regional disputes, and promote international peace and stability.

The two sides also voiced support for all the efforts to overcome problems facing the world community, foremost among them being drought, desertification, pollution, epidemics, and others.

Regarding bilateral relations, the two sides noted with extreme satisfaction the positive developments and the steady growth in the various fields of bilateral cooperation. They reviewed in detail aspects of bilateral cooperation in the fields of economics, commerce, investment, culture, information, manpower, transportation, and communications, as well as other important domains. A number of measures were agreed upon to further augment this cooperation and expand it in the interests of the two fraternal countries.

An agreement was reached to set up a joint committee under the chairmanship of the two countries' foreign ministers and including the membership of the ministers concerned, in accordance with the agreement concluded between the two countries in this respect. The joint committee shall outline the priorities in the various fields of bilateral cooperation and joint action, and follow up their implementation. It will meet once every 6 months, and the venue for the meetings will alternate between the two countries' capitals.

Agreement was reached to bolster and encourage the private sector's role in the two countries to serve as an auxiliary factor in realizing and implementing the countries' development plans and in attracting Arab and

international capital and investments. Agreement was also reached to arrange periodic meetings between businessmen from the two countries.

The possibility of building an overland road linking the two fraternal countries was also discussed. The subject will be referred to specialists, who will study it and submit their findings to the pertinent authorities in the two countries.

The two sides expressed their interest in joint cooperation in exploiting the natural resources in the Red Sea area, which represent a new and important source for achieving the goals and requirements of the development plans in the two countries.

On the occasion of this important historic visit, President Muhammad Husni Mubarak conferred the sash of the Grand Nile on the servant of the two holy mosques. The Saudi monarch conferred on the president of the republic the King 'Abd al-'Aziz medal. These are the most distinguished decorations in the two countries. This was done as an expression of the everlasting ties and the genuine brotherly relations between them, and as a sign of mutual appreciation for the efforts which the two Arab leaders are exerting to bolster and strengthen joint Arab action and thus serve the sublime Arab and Islamic goals.

The servant of the two holy mosques expressed happiness with his visit to Egypt and with the progress and sincere efforts being made toward development and construction which he saw during this visit. He also expressed his thanks and appreciation for the warm welcome and the true sentiments of love with which he was received and which express Egypt's integrity and the ties of religion, blood, language, and brotherhood between the two countries.

The servant of the two holy mosques King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz extended an invitation to his brother President Muhammad Husni Mubarak to visit the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The president accepted the invitation with thanks and promised to pay the visit as soon as possible.

Issued in Cairo on Friday, 24 Sha'ban 1409 hegira, corresponding to 31 March 1989.

President Mubarak, Sudan's Al-Mirghani on Talks
NC3003153089 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1250 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—At the conclusion of his talks with Ahmad al-Mirghani, chairman of the Sudanese State Council, President Muhammad Husni Mubarak said no one can steer Egyptian-Sudanese relations onto a course different from that chosen by both peoples.

Answering a question on his appraisal of these relations, President Mubarak said there is much talk about these relations in both Egypt and Sudan. However, he added, our relations do not need all this.

The president said misunderstandings happen sometimes, but our relations are good and on their normal course. Nobody, whoever he may be, can mar these relations. Replying to a question on reviving and promoting economic cooperation between Egypt and Sudan, the president said we spare no effort to promote cooperation with Sudan. He added: We began an integration agreement and went a long way with this. However, for some reason integration efforts stopped. The president continued: We later took the course of the brotherhood charter, and Brother Ahmad al-Mirghani knows what has been done in this regard. As we open our doors to cooperation with Sudan, we hope we will be able to promote this cooperation to both peoples' advantage.

The president remarked that Sudan possesses land which provides food, not only for the Sudanese people, but for the entire Arab world. Moreover, he said, Sudan has extensive experience, which can benefit the Sudanese people and achieve the economic revival which would generate great gains for the Sudanese and the Arab states.

Answering another question on whether Egypt is playing a significant role in the Sudanese peace process, President Mubarak said Egypt actually plays a very significant role in Sudan. Do you not know that Egypt has an eminent role in the peace process in Sudan, he asked, adding: Our role never ceases. The president added: We hold contacts with Ethiopian President Mengistu, and he responds. I dare say that he responds in most cases, thanks to our strong ties with him, Mubarak said. He added: Mengistu always responds to most peace demands.

Mubarak said: I believe that Mr al-Mirghani is aware of the contacts we held before and during the signing of the peace accord in Ethiopia betwen John Garang and the Democratic Unionist Party. Before this agreement, the president added, we contacted the Ethiopian president and he responded, allowing the peace process to achieve progress.

The president added: We are still making efforts for the sake of Sudan because its stability concerns us. We want the Sudanese people to enjoy a dignified life and to produce the necessary food.

President Mubarak responded to a question on the possibility of the Egyptian and Sudanese prime ministers' holding a meeting to follow up implementation of the brotherhood charter. He said: Hearing this question, you would think that matters had reached a standstill. He asserted that matters are taking their normal course and that nothing has stopped between Egypt and Sudan.

Mubarak said: We have a joint project in the (Al-Damazin) area in Sudan which can be expanded. The president remarked that such an expansion would not require a meeting between prime ministers; the concerned ministers can meet and activate things. Mubarak responded to a question on whether the joint defense pact between Egypt and Sudan is still valid. The president said neither Egypt

nor Sudan has abrogated this agreement. The president remarked that this agreement is in Sudan's favor and that there is no reason to discuss it.

Responding to a question on the Arab Cooperation Council and whether it can contribute to large projects in Sudan, the president said: You heard Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, King Husayn of Jordan, President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih of the Yemen Arab Republic, and me, say that this grouping is not restricted to the four countries. He added: We have laid the foundation and drawn up the rules. Any state can join this grouping if it wishes. Sudan is certainly one of the states which welcomes the idea of joining the grouping after the basic rules in the coming stage are established.

The president said: We welcome Sudan to the grouping because the grouping is not restricted to certain members. It groups a number of Arab countries to the advantage of the entire Arab nation and under the umbrella of the Arab League.

Ahmad al-Mirghani replied to a question on the dates for the constitutional conference in Sudan and for lifting emergency laws. He said that at its first session, the new Sudanese cabinet approved the peace accord and decided to set up an operations room under the foreign minister's chairmanship. This operations room has immediately started to arrange a meeting in Ethiopia with the John Garang movement, and the constitutional conference will be held later to establish peace in Sudan, God willing, he said.

Answering a question on whether Al-Mirghani and President Mubarak had discussed the problem of Sudan's western borders, President Mubarak said: There is no need to talk about Sudan's border with Libya because there is no problem, and because no country can encroach on another's borders.

Al-Mirghani was asked whether there is a balanced Sudanese policy toward neighboring countries. He said there is.

Answering a question on Egyptian-Sudanese relations, Al-Mirghani replied that they are very good.

Asked if the tension between the two countries had been just a passing cloud, Al-Mirghani said there is no tension at all.

Asked whether his quick visit to Cairo today has anything to do with President Mubarak's visit to the United States, Al-Mirghani said: My visit to Egypt is connected with several issues. He said that he had discussed many topics with President Mubarak, adding that the visit was successful by all standards. He said: The issues discussed during the talks are very important, and our views on them were identical.

Al-Mirghani was asked about reports that John Garang went back on his approval of the peace accord signed in Ethiopia because he thinks the accord has been nipped in the bud. Al-Mirghani said: I have not heard that report, and the agreement still stands, as far as I know.

On relations between Sudan and Ethiopia, Al-Mirghani said that President Mubarak had played a significant role in improving these relations, which are excellent at present.

Libya

Sudan's Al-Mirghani Arrives With Delegation

LD2903205389 Tripoli JANA in English 1832 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] Tripoli, Al-Mirrikh 29, JAMAHIRYAH NEWS AGENCY—Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, the president of the United Democratic Party in sisterly Sudan and the delegation in his company arrived this afternoon in Tripoli on a visit to great Jamahiryah. Welcoming him at the airport was Colonel Abu Bakr Yunis Jabir.

Taking part in the welcoming ceremony were the secretary of the General People's Committee for Information and Culture, the secretary of the People's Congress for the Municipality of [words indistinct] the ambassador and staff of the Sudanese Embassy to great Jamahiryah.

Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani lauded, in a statement to JANA, the unlimited support provided by the people of great Jamahiryah to their brotherly Sudanese people until the popular revolution triumphed over the regime of deposed Numayri.

He praised the stances of the Libyan Arab people on the side of the Sudanese people during the years of drought, floods of recent months and total and continuous support provided by great Jamahiryah for sisterly Sudan.

Received by Al-Qadhdhafi

LD3003205189 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1930 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Tripoli, 30 Mar, JANA—The brother leader of the revolution has received Brother Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, chairman of the Democratic Unionist Party in sisterly Sudan. The meeting was attended by Colonel Abu Bakr Yunis Jabir.

Sudan's Pan-Arab Front Chairman Sees Al-Qadhdhafi

LD2903210389 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1915 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] Tripoli, 29 Al-Mirrikh, JANA—The brother leader of the revolution has received brother Hassan al-Turabi, chairman of the pan-Arab Front in brotherly Sudan, and his delegation.

Addresses Tubruq Meeting

LD2903105989 Tripoli Television Service in Arabic 1048 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Speech by Dr Hasan 'Abdallah al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front, on behalf of the Sudanese delegation to the General People's Congress meeting in Tubruq]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] We have come not as a diplomatic mission but as a popular initiative, a free initiative, to build the pillars of unity with which our hearts bound. [passage omitted] We are happy to attend your meeting and cherish your decision to set up yet another base to the bases of Arab unity, God willing, in the blessed Arab Maghreb.

As we express these greetings to you, we do so from a country that is struggling these days to consolidate its Islamic identity among the nations and to assert its Arab identity among peoples. It is a country that is embroiled in a cultural struggle. It is faced with challenges which seem to obliterate this identity.

We have accepted democracy despite all the falsehoods it embodies. However, when the others realized that we have emerged from all these falsehoods to assert our Islamic Arab identity they have sought today to suppress it. They do not want freedom nor a true will for our people. They want to repress it so that it will not be able to express this identity, assert it and establish it. God willing, our march will advance from our present deteriorating conditions to the perfection we seek.

As you know, we are a country which God has endowed with open and hidden resources. But we chose servility. We chose to be parasites. Thus they provided us with what they called development aid. They rushed to us with what they called humanitarian relief. When they turned us into beggars relying on them, they turned against us and changed their previous smile. They thus used aid and means of charity to pressure us to prevent us from seeking what we want and from becoming what we ought to be.

In these days when the Arab world is searching for the wide-based unity which it lost because of plots and intrigues, in these days when the brother Arabs have become divided into three groupings, Sudan seems rather isloated, when it is the outlet of Arabism into the African continent. It is also the outlet of Islam, which involved it in the struggle over Africa. They did not want Africa to have a religion which would lead it out of the darkness and into the light, and from division and into unity. They want to impose on it symbols of Western culture which claims heritage from Christ—may God bless His soul—while Christ has nothing to do with it. This is to keep Africa as the focus for their exploitation and world arrogance.

Today Sudan seems isolated, but it is not really. As you know, it is closely connected with the Jamahiriyah. Whenever it suffered crisis and tribulations, our brothers in the Libyan Jamahiriyah came to its aid and supported its people. [applause and chants]

Brothers, we are confident that through your close ties of neighborhood—which the arrogant colonialist countries want to sever and on which we insist and will continue, God willing, to be loyal to—you will link us to our brothers in the Arab Maghreb. It is with shame that we say that their links with Sudan were much deeper 100 years ago than they are today. Thus today you are reviving a tradition that has died and a history that has faded out.

We are also linked to our brothers in the Gulf union through the Red Sea and through our proximity to Saudi Arabia. We are linked to our brothers in Yemen, our brothers in Egypt, and the new Arab grouping.

God willing, we will be an outlet for the Arabs. God willing, we will be a link for the Arabs. Though some people chose to say that Sudan should be left to its preoccupations and problems until it frees itself from them, we need Arab unity and also Islamic unity to be able to withstand these challenges. We are not the only ones in mind. The arrows that are fired at our breasts now, if they were to succeed in destroying Sudan, will go beyond it to other borders. This is their intrigue. But, God willing, we will continue the struggle to consolidate our Arab and Islamic identity. God willing, we will struggle to realize the model Muslim Arab society in Sudan, God willing, despite the unbelievers and idolaters. We are confident that you, our brothers in the Jamahiriyah, are our best supporters and backers, after God Almighty. [passage omitted]

Morocco

Political Opposition Figure Arrested in Rabat

LD3103090189 Paris International Service in French 0630 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] In Morocco the Socialist Union of Popular Forces [USFP], one of the main opposition forces which currently is holding its congress, confirmed the arrest of a member of its Central Committee in Rabat on Wednesday. He is Mohamed Ait Kadour, who was arrested when he returned from Paris even though he held a travel document as a political refugee which was issued by the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons.

Mohamed Ait Kadour was sentenced to death in absentia after the 1972 assassination attempt against King Hassan II. He has lived in exile in France since that date. For the moment, nothing is known of his fate since his arrival in Rabat, where he planned, in fact, to attend the Fifth USFP Congress.

Sudan

Khartoum University Ordered Closed Until 3 Jun

EA3003191589 Khartoum SUNA in French 1525 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Khartoum, 30 March—Dr Yusuf Fadl Hasan, rector of Khartoum University, issued an order today to close the University of Khartoum until 3 June in light of a report drawn up by the Council of Deans following its extraordinary meeting on Wednesday evening. Lecturers at the university have been on strike since the beginning of March protesting the lack of response to their demands for the establishment of the independence of the university, improvement in working conditions, and changes in the salary structure of lecturers.

Al-Mahdi, Defense Chiefs Attend Army Ceremony

EA2903125789 Omdurman Domestic Service in Arabic 2130 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi attended at 0800 today the celebrations of the Commanders and General Staff College graduating its 17th class of students among whom were officers from Jordan, UAE and Palestine. The celebrations were also attended by the defense minister, Armed Forces commander in chief, some ambassadors of fraternal and friendly countries, military attaches, the chief of the general staff, his assistants, and other Army commanders.

The defense minister, Retired General Mubarak 'Uthman Rahmah addressed the ceremony, congratulating the new graduates and saying that the general command in its plan to qualify and develop the forces has laid a scientific cornerstone of modern war studies. He also affirmed his support for the Armed Forces and the preservation of its national character.

The ceremony was also addressed by the commander of the college who thanked the prime minister for his concern and gave advice that will help the new graduates in their practical work.

Spokesman Says Government To Support Armed Forces

EA2703181689 Khartoum National Unity Radio in Arabic 1245 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Dr Husayn Sulayman Abu Salih, the minister of culture and information and the official government spokesman, has said the policy of the sixth government is to support the Armed Forces both in peacetime and in wartime. He told the press yesterday that there was no contradiction between the government's peace process and supporting the battle and defense capacities of the Armed Forces, stressing that the government is fully committed to supporting the Armed Forces effectively and supporting their capacity to secure the country's independence.

Ummah Party Deputy Head Reportedly Resigns

JN2603104689 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0940 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Text] Doha, 26 Mar (WAKH)—Qatari newspaper, AL-'ARAB, said in an item it carried from Khartoum today that Nasr al-Din al-Mahdi, deputy head of the Ummah Party, handed in a memorandum yesterday evening to the head of the party, Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, asking him to relieve him of his position as deputy head of the party's organs, and to freeze his membership until the party's next conference.

The newspaper, citing a source close to the Sudanese prime minister, clarified that this stand was a result of Nasr al-Din's not being convinced of the new government formation and his dissatisfaction over what is happening in the political arena in general.

The source clarified that Nasr al-Din al-Mahdi believes that the new ministerial formation is not in accordance with what has been agreed on and that it was based on some personal favors. He believes that the request for his release is a documentation of a stand.

The source said that this does not mean that Nasr al-Din al-Mahdi will isolate himself from the Ummah Party and Ansar entity. His demand did not come as a result of a desire to form a split in party ranks. However, he believes that this stand is for the benefit of the party and its march.

Kuwait

Airport Receives False Bomb Threat 28 Mar

JN3003155689 Kuwait AL-SIYASAH in Arabic 29 Mar 89 p 1

[Text] Kuwait airport yesterday evening received a false threat on the existence of a bomb on a Kuwaiti Airbus leased to Emirates Airways that was flying in Kuwaiti airspace. The plane was given immediate instructions to land in Kuwait. This took place at 2115 yesterday.

At the same time, instructions were given to other planes coming to Kuwait to land at the closest airports. Among them were planes coming from Baghdad, Cairo, and Istanbul. Later, these planes were instructed to land in Kuwait airport after it had been affirmed that the bomb threat was a hoax.

Pakistani Minister Assured of Places for Workers

JN2903164689 Kuwait ARAB TIMES in English 28 Mar 89 p 1

[By Ashraf Shad]

[Excerpt] Kuwait, March 27—Kuwait has assured Pakistan that it will permit Pakistani workers to come here to work, Mukhtar Ahmad Awan, the Pakistani Minister for Labour and Manpower said today.

Awan, who is visiting Kuwait, also said that the assurance was given by Kuwait's Minister for Social Welfare and Labour, Shaykh Nasir Muhammad Al-Ahmad. Awan met Shaykh Nasir today to discuss labour issues and other matters of mutual interest.

Two committees of experts, representing Pakistan and Kuwait, are currently holding talks on manpower requirements of Kuwait. [passage omitted]

Leaves for Saudi Arabia

LD2903180989 Kuwait KUNA in English 1636 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] Kuwait, March 29 (KUNA)—Pakistani Minister for Labor Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Awan left Kuwait for Saudi Arabia Wednesday at the end of four days of talks with Kuwaiti leaders.

He told KUNA before departure that he had conveyed messages from Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to his highness the amir of Kuwait and His Highness Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'id al-Abdallah on the growing ties between the two friendly countries.

The Pakistani minister praised ties between his country and Kuwait saying the two states have for ages had historic, cultural and traditional ties.

"In Kuwait the system is very good and a lot of progress has been made in past years," He said, adding that his country wants to contribute to Kuwait's development "by exporting manpower, skilled and unskilled."

He suggested that Pakistan contribute to Kuwait's progress in agricultural areas, construction and other fields open for such cooperation.

The minister who arrived here on Sunday said, "We think our expertise in Pakistan shall be available for the progress of Kuwait and the works which are being done and projects to be opened in the next five-year plan. On these fronts we have achieved great understanding."

He stressed that the impression he had been given earlier that Pakistani manpower in Kuwait was being discouraged was entirely untrue.

He added that Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs and Labour Shaykh Nasir Muhammad al-Ahmad had assured him that the impression was "wrong".

Awan said he relayed the Kuwaiti Government's position to the Pakistani community here.

New Labor Law on Expatriates Takes Effect

JN2303162589 Kuwait ARAB TIMES in English 22 Mar 89 p 1

[By Lima al-Khalafawi]

[Text] Time has run out for expatriate workers in the private sector who want to change jobs but haven't met the requirements of the new labour law.

As of today, the only private sector workers who can change jobs are those who have either served a full three years in their current jobs or else have been in Kuwait legally for more than ten years.

Assistant Undersectary for Labour Affairs Muhammad al-Shabnan told the Arab Times that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour will not give private sector employees any more time to "settle their affairs," as they have been given enough time already.

Al-Shabnan said the government's various labour departments each have their own field inspection teams, and will require no additional inspectors for the enforcement of the new regulations. The inspectors aim to protect workers as well as checking to see if they have the appropriate permits, he added.

All those who applied for a transfer to residency or change of sponsor before March 21 will not be affected by the new law, Al-Shabnan said.

The official described rumours that the law would be postponed as baseless. He emphasised that the ministry has no such intentions, and that the decision to implement the law which was published in the Kuwait Gazette on Jan 22 will be enforced from today.

He admitted that there has been an increase in the number of applicants wanting to change their sponsors or residency, particularly in the past few days, but said that precise figures will not be available until the end of the month.

A special employment section for Kuwaitis and GCC citizens will be established in all labour departments in the various governorates, Al-Shabnan said, adding that a centralised department will be established to coordinate and exchange information between the various sections.

The new law strictly bans foreign workers from taking up employment with anyone other than the official sponsor. According to the law, any expatriate found working in two places in the private sector will be deported, with the second employer bearing the cost of deportation.

The law, however, does not apply to expatriates working in the government sector, who will continue to be able to seek part time work elsewhere.

The law also states that the minister of labour has the right to exempt any worker from the stated time restrictions if the worker has been dismissed from their job. The ministry also has the right to tansfer a work permit to another sponsor, even if the employer refuses or without referring to the employer.

The ministerial order extends the contract period for expatriate workers to three years, and states that contracts should be renewed three months prior to expiry.

Oman

Britain's Hurd Arrives on 4-Day Visit 28 Mar

JN2803193889 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1850 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Muscat, 28 Mar (WAKH)—British Home Secretary Douglas Hurd arrived in Muscat this evening coming from Manama on a 4-day official visit to the Sultanate of Oman. He was received upon arrival by Information Minister 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Muhammad al-Rawwas and the accredited British ambassador to Oman.

Received by Sultan Qabus

JN3003143189 Muscat Domestic Service in Arabic 1300 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] His Majesty Sultan Qabus ibn Sa'id received British Home Secretary Douglas Hurd today at his office in the Salalah Palace. He is currently visiting the country. The meeting was attended by Information Minister 'Abd al-'Aziz Muhammad al-Rawwas and the accredited British ambassador to the sultanate.

Meets With Foreign Minister

JN3003163489 Manama WAKH in English 1550 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Muscat, March 30 (GNA)—Omani State Minister for Foreign Affairs Yusuf Ibn 'Alawi Ibn 'Abdallah received here today British Secretary of State Douglas Hurd, currently visiting Oman. The two sides reviewed bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest, radio Muscat said today.

Holds News Conference

JN3003200789 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1920 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Muscat, 30 Mar (WAKH)—British Home Secretary Douglas Hurd called for holding an international peace conference in the Middle East with the participation of Palestinians from inside and outside the occupied territories.

Hurd affirmed in a news conference he held here this evening that the PLO plays an important role in the peace process in the Middle East, especially since the recent Palestine National Council resolutions.

He said his country can play a role in seeking a settlement in the Middle East if this conference convenes in its capactity as a permanent member of the Security Council and the EEC. He added that we are living today in a world looking toward the establishment of peace and understanding among nations. It looks toward relations based on dialogue and exchange of points of view for mankind's benefit.

The British minister added that his discussions today with Omani Sultan Qabus ibn Sa'id dealt with bilateral relations and means of promoting and strengthening them. They also discussed issues of training individuals in the Omani police in addition to discussing a number of international issues and the Middle East crisis.

PDRY

North-South Yemen Committee Issues Resolutions

EA2503072389 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 24 Mar 89

[Text] The ministerial joint committee of the two parts of the homeland has stressed the need for the unity committees to go on working until they complete their tasks within the suggested six scheduled sessions of the secretariat and the political joint committee. This was laid down in the resolutions and recommendations adopted by the ministerial joint committee during its first 1989 session in the capital, Sanaa, from 21 to 23 March. The ministerial committee called on the Yemeni Supreme Council to set as early a date as possible by which the committees should complete their tasks and to instruct the secretariat to arrange for the committees to resume work.

The names of the members of the united organizing political committee are as follows: From the southern part of the homeland: Salim Salih Muhammad, Dr Sayf Sa'id Khalid, Dr Salim 'Umar Bukayr, Dr Salih Muhsin al-Hajj: from the northern part of the homeland: Dr 'Abd al-Karim al-Iryani, Yahya Husayn al-Arashi, Dr Ahmad al-Asbahi, Ali Muslih Qa'id: Colonel Abdullah al-Bashiri, Isma'il al-Wazir and Ahmad 'Ali al-Makhtari.

In the field of trade, the ministerial committee charged the relevant quarters with implementing resolutions adopted by the trade exchange committee at its last meeting in Aden 3 to 5 July 1985.

In the field of public works, the committee charged the ministers of public works, transport and construction in the two parts of the homeland with implementing the agreement signed by the two premiers in May 1988 on the search for local or foreign sources of finance to construct roads between the two parts in accordance with the agreement signed in Sanaa in July 1985 by the ministers of works and construction of the two parts.

In the fields of transport and communications the committee charged the relevant quarters in the two parts to implement all the bilateral agreements, particularly that on the installations of telecommunications networks of various types and of a direct visual communications link between the two parts.

In the fields of agriculture and fisheries, the ministerial joint committee charged the ministers of agriculture, agricultural reform and fisheries in the two parts to follow up and implement the decisions of the third session of the ministerial committee for agriculture and fisheries held in Sanaa from 6 to 10 July 1985.

In the fields of education and culture, the committee expressed satisfaction with the current expansion of coordination and cooperation between the universities of Aden and Sanaa, educational research centers, studies, archeological departments, libraries [words indistinct] in the field of preparing, conducting and attending scientific and historical lectures in the two parts and in the Arab world.

The committee charged the relevant quarters with implementing all agreements adopted in this sector by the various committees. It also charged the secretariat of the Yemeni council with laying down an intensive timetable for the education and training committee charged with preparing curricula for the various educational levels and also dealing with the cultural heritage and literature.

The committee also charged the ministers of information and culture of the two parts and the various relevant quarters with implementing resolutions adopted earlier by taking the necessary steps to guarantee freedom of distribution of books, published material, newspapers, magazines and recorded material between the two parts in accordance with the existing laws. The committee stressed the need for the two parts to register joint scientific societies to serve science and disseminate Yemeni culture and history. The committee also stressed the importance of implementing the Yemeni council's decision to establish a higher arts and literature council.

On the project for a constitution for the unitary state, the committee recommended that during its forthcoming session, the Yemeni Supreme Council should take the necessary steps to approve the constitution under an agreed timetable as soon as possible.

The committee declared itself satisfied with the implementation of agreements, particularly that on freedom of movement between the two parts. It charged the two interior ministers and other relevant quarters with fully implementing the provisions of the agreement signed by the premiers of the two parts and with submitting regular reports on the extent of execution, the difficulties which may emerge and steps taken to overcome them to the council's secretariat. The ministers are to ensure that the relevant quarters act to abolish the tax imposed on vehicles transporting citizens between the two parts, to coordinate formalities on the common border, and to abolish measures not provided for in the agreement signed by the two premiers.

The committee declared itself satisfied with the development of meetings and various forms of coordination between the neighboring governorates and stressed the need for such action to continue in order to solve the various problems that may arise between the governorates. This must be done in a manner involving all the officials in the governorates at the provincial, district, and subdistrict levels.

The committee stressed the need for expanded meetings and coordination to embrace youth organizations, sports, social and cooperative groups and schools. The ministerial joint committee called for an enthusiastic response from the popular, professional, and creative organizations to meet and work out principles for their unity within the Yemeni homeland, stressing the need to continue in this way until all the Yemeni popular, professional, and creative organizations are united.

Qatar

Amir Ratifies State Budget for Fiscal 1989-90

JN2703172689 Manama WAKH in English 1616 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Doha, March 27 (GNA)—H.H. the Amir of Qatar Shaykh Khalifah ibn Hamad Al Thani today issued an amiri decree ratifying the country's general state budget for fiscal 1989-90.

In a statement on the occasion, Finance and Petroleum Minister Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Khalifah Al Thani explained the basic characteristics of the new budget which starts on first of April.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz noted that the new budget presupposes the continuation of the policy of expenditure rationalization and development of revenue resources without undermining general performance.

A second characteristic of the new budget is that it gives priority to special expenditure on public services. The budget also encompasses the method of public and private sector participation in reinvigorating the national economy. The new budget takes into account oil revenue estimates in light of the world oil market reality where no radical changes in the general economic situation are expected in the upcoming year, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz noted.

The new budget includes total revenues of Qatari riyals [QRS] 5.835 billion, or 7.9 per cent less than estimates for the previous fiscal years. Expenditures are put at QRS 11.482 billion and a 7.7 percent cut compared to the previous year. The budget thus ecompasses a deficit of QRS 5.648 billion, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz said.

The budget allocated QRS 1.513 billion for building, public, economic, social and health services as well as education and youth welfare. The provision of allocations for basic projects, took into account completion of existing ones and required additions so as to utilise their productivity as soon as possible. Care was also taken to initiate new projects that are needed while balancing financial potentials and the future plan which aims at bolstering basic services projects, public services and housing schemes.

According to a budget breakdown, QRS 906 million has been earmarked for the building and public services sector. This sum represented roughly 60 per cent of total allocations. Of this sum, QRS 120 million has been allocated for acquisition of property and QRS. 15 million for the acquisition of land for senior staff housing schemes. The building and public services sector includes mosques, roads and sewerage networks.

Allocations for the economic services sector reached QRS 412 million. The largest portion of this sum, QRS 365 million has been earmarked for electricity and water projects whose total cost are estimated at QRS 1400 billion. The project consists of building three electricity generating units and two others for water desalination. It also includes expanding the electricity and water networks and raising the water storing capacity.

A sum of QRS 133 million has been allocated for social and health services. Low cost housing schemes have been allocated QRS 90 million. The remainder will finance upgrading the Rumaylah hospital, building new health centres and clinics and city beatifications projects.

The education and youth welfare sector has been allocated QRS 63 million.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz noted that, as seen in the budget estimates, a deficit persisted despite strenous efforts to cut it down. He explained that the deficit was due to the economic conditions the entire world has been suffering for several years. The Qatari finance and petroleum minister expressed his hopes that allocations will be adhered to strictly while serious work will be undertaken to lower the deficit "so that the blessed constructive process of development would continue under the leader ship of h.h. the amir and the heir apparent. [quotation marks as received]

Saudi Arabia

Slain Imam Allegedly Threatened by Iranians

NC3103110189 Paris AFP in English 1029 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] Riyadh, March 31 (AFP)—The general secretary of the World Moslem League charged Friday that "Iranians" had threatened the life of a moderate Brussels-based Moslem leader who was shot dead there Wednesday.

'Abdallah 'Amr Nasif, quoted by the Saudi newspaper AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, said 'Abdallah al-Ahdal, a spiritual leader for Moslems residing in Belgium, had several times told him of "death threats issued by Iranians."

Mr al-Ahdal, a Saudi national, was shot dead at point-blank range in Brussels Wednesday along with Salim bin Muhammad Bahri, a Tunisian and librarian at the Brussels Islamic Cultural Center. Investigators said the pair was killed an hour after Mr al-Ahdal had met with local Moslems angered by his moderate stance in the Salman Rushdie affair. Mr al-Ahdal had condemned Mr Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses," which has been denounced in the Moslem world as blasphemous to Islam, but criticized a death decree issued against the British author by Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni.

Belgian authorities have disclosed that Mr al-Ahdal had been given police protection following death threats, made by an anonymous caller after he had rejected Ayatollah Khomeyni's appeal for Mr Rushdie's death. The slain imam, according to Mr Nasif, had been issued a firearm by police.

The World Moslem League, a Mecca-based, pro-Saudi association of Islamic theologians, strongly condemned the assassinations in a statement Thursday.

Mr al-Ahdal's body, according to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, was to be returned to Saudi Arabia Friday aboard a plane specially ordered by King Fahd.

After a 24-hour period of silence, most Saudi newspapers have now reported on the killings and the condemnations issued by Islamic leaders and organizations.

'Economic Balance' Policy in Foreign Ventures

LD2603214789 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2030 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Excerpts] Al-Kharj, 26 Mar (SPA)—His Royal Highness Prince Sultan ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation, and inspector general, praised the unlimited support and generous patronage granted by King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, to all branches of the Saudi Armed Forces.

In a statement to the press at the end of his visit to the Public Institution for Military Industries in Al-Kharj today, his royal highness praised the blessing of security and stability witnessed by the kingdom. [passage omitted]

Replying to a question, he pointed out that there are technical committees in the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] which are working to develop the GCC countries' military industries. His royal highness expressed his conviction that there are good military industries in a number of Arab countries, such as Egypt and Iraq. His royal highness added that the future might bring all the Arab industries together in coordinated action in which they could implement the missions of both military and civilian industries with the cooperation of the private sector and of citizens.

His royal highness said that the kingdom has followed a new course, called economic balance, which began to be implemented in all dealings with the United States, where we already have begun to form five industrial companies, some of which are with the Public Institution for Military Industries of Saudi Arabia. The others are industries that concern Saudi Airways and the national industries, and some are related to certain industrial achievements.

His Royal Highness added that these companies will commence work within 1-2 months of their proclamation. His Royal Highness pointed out that commencing work with the United States in these companies means that 49 percent of the capital is Saudi and 51 percent is an investment of the monies used for buying weapons from the United States.

His royal highness said: This is happening for the first time in the world. We have made a start. Now we are repeating this start with the British Government in the Al-Yamamah project. We started to cooperate within the limit of 25 percent of all the sums allocated for the Al-Yamamah project so as to be in an economic balance. His Royal Highness added that the ministerial and prepatory committee met in London 3 week ago and that the meeting was very successful. Five hundred British companies specializing in the national industries of the two countries have also met with the committee.

His royal highness announced that work will begin with the French Government on the basis of economic balance. His royal highness stressed the importance of this because of the previously implemented projects, for which money still remains to be paid over the coming years or because of the projects to be carried out in the future. We will start to act on the basis of economic balance, as we have started with the United States and Britain.

In his replies, his royal highness warned against the schemes planned outside the Arab nation to harm Arab solidarity, cooperation, and amity. His royal highness stressed the importance of the distinguished fraternal relations between Saudi Arabia and the Yeman Arab Republic, which are based on neighborliness and on unity of religion and language.

His royal highness answered a question concerning the Israeli enemy's noncompliance with the laws on nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. He said that banning nuclear weapons is a necessary human principle, whatever the irresponsibility of others might be. His royal highness pointed out that arming with anything that could deter the enemy is in the cards.

United Arab Emirates

PFLP's Habash Meets Shaykh Zayid in Abu Dhabi

JN2803204989 Manama WAKH in Arabic 2028 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 28 Mar (WAKH)—This evening United Arab Emirates [UAE] President Shaykh Zayid ibn Sultan Al Nuhayyan received Dr George Habash, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, currently visiting Abu Dhabi.

Dr George Habash stated after the meeting that the valiant intifadah [uprising] of the Palestinian people in the occupied homeland was the focal point of his discussion with Shaykh Zayid. He expressed his feelings of satisfaction over what he heard from him, whether dealing with his concern over the valiant intifadah or the duties of the Arab countries to guarantee victory for this valiant intifadah.

He said that the great interest and complete concern shown by the UAE president for this blessed intifadah and the horizons open before its future and its fate really please us greatly.

He added that the meeting also dealt with the situation of the Palestinians in the UAE. He said Shaykh Zayid affirmed that he considers the Palestinians present on UAE territory as his own sons and citizens.

Dr Habash offered great gratitude and appreciation to Shaykh Zayid on the UAE's firm and principled stand supporting the Palestine question and the Palestinian people in the UAE and the occupied homeland.

Talks With Finance Minister

JN2903143289 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1250 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] Dubayy, 29 Mar (WAKH)—In Dubayy today, Shaykh Hamdan ibn Rashid Al Maktum, finance and industry minister of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], received Dr George Habash, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], who is currently visiting the UAE.

During the meeting, they reviewed a number of issues pertaining to the Palestine question and the current efforts to find a peaceful solution to this question and to establish an independent Palestinian state on Palestinian soil.

Dr Habash and Shaykh Hamdan also discussed the current situation in the occupied Arab territories in light of the escalation by the Palestinian people of their valiant intifadah [uprising] and the fierce onslaught being launched by the Israeli occupation troops against the stone-throwing children.

Dr Habash voiced his pleasure and pride over the pan-Arab sentiments being harbored toward the Palestinian Arab people of the occupied Arab territories by the UAE and Arab officials from other fraternal Arab states. He also paid tribute to the UAE and fraternal Arab states for the support that they are providing to this people so that they can continue their struggle against the occupation authorities, realize their independence, and establish an independent state on their national soil.

Yemen Arab Republic

USSR Deputy Interior Minister Arrives on Visit

JN2903140089 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] Lieutenant General Vasiliy Petrovich Trushin, USSR first deputy internal affairs minister, arrived in Sanaa this morning heading a delegation on a week-long visit to our country. He will hold talks with the brother officials in the Interior Ministry regarding the strengthening of cooperation between the interior ministries in both countries.

In a statement to SABA', the USSR first deputy internal affairs minister explained that his visit, together with the accompanying delegation, comes in response to an invitation from the Interior Ministry. He praised the strong relations which were bolstered between the two ministries following the visit made by the brother deputy interior minister to the USSR last year. He pointed out that during this visit, an agreement for cooperation between the interior ministries in both countries will be signed.

The visiting official was received by Brother Colonel Muhammad 'Abdallah Salih, deputy interior minister, commander of Central Security, and member of the Standing Committee; Lieutenant Colonel Ahmad al-Khatabi, Interior Ministry undersecretary for administrative units; a number of officials from the Ministry; and Veniamin Popov, USSR ambassador in Sanaa.

Praises Cooperation Ties

JN2903183989 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] Official Yemeni-Soviet talks began at the Interior Ministry today. The Yemeni side was headed by Brother Colonel Muhammad 'Abdallah Salih, deputy prime minister and Standing Committee member. The Soviet side was headed by Lieutenant General Vasiliy Petrovich Trushin, USSR first deputy interior minister, who arrived in Sanaa earlier today.

In a speech he made at the beginning of the meeting, the brother deputy interior minister praised the ties of cooperation between the interior ministries in the two friendly countries. He said that these ties come to entrench the ties of friendship existing between the two peoples and governments which were established during the twenties [as heard] and extended over the years to witness the most splendid, strongest, and deepest applications under the political leaderships of the two countries, headed by brother leader President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

For his part, the USSR first deputy interior minister expressed his joy at visiting our country. He referred to the depth of ties of friendship between the two countries which are characterized by strength and development, especially following the visit made by Colonel 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president leader and secretary general of the General People's Congress, to the Soviet Union.

The session was attended by members of both delegations to the talks.

'Izzat Ibrahim on National Assembly Elections

JN2903214189 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1445 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, 29 Mar (INA)—'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and chairman of the higher committee entrusted with supervising National Assembly elections, has affirmed that the assembly elections which will be held on Saturday [1 April] mark a new change in all the procedures and measures adopted when the Iraqi National Assembly was born.

In a statement to INA, the RCC vice chairman said the first new element in this assembly session elections is that all candidates, be they party members or non-party members, Ba'th Party members or non-Ba'th Party members, or members of allied parties, will be given an equal opportunity as regards the access to and utilization of political, legal, administrative, information, and intellectual media. He added that all candidates will be competing in a free democratic manner in the election process which will be held on 1 April where eligibility for National Assembly membership in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and honesty with citizens, at work, and in public life will be the criteria affecting the voters' decisions.

'Izzat Ibrahim pointed out that the second new element here is banning the utilization by the candidate of his personal or government capabilities outside the framework of the official plan endorsed by the higher committee entrusted with supervising National Assembly elections so that he will not have the chance to exploit his financial, party, or government position, thus undermining and negatively affecting other candidates. He added that these rules have been spelled out in the instructions issued by the higher committee entrusted with supervising National Assembly elections—the instructions which state in clear terms the rights and duties of candidates.

On the parliamentary and political figures which have been invited to attend the elections, the RCC vice chairman indicated that the leadership of the [Ba'th] Party and the revolution has been eager "to make this democratic experience which has been ripened by the doctrine of our party, the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, open for universal experiences to bring about further interaction with these experiences. And this would enrich our experience and enable it to develop continuously in a manner that would help express the principles cherished by the revolution and by great Iraq so that the leadership's aspiration regarding the realization of the national and democratic experience based on the principles of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party can become a reality to be built upon."

On the preparations made by the higher committee entrusted with supervising National Assembly elections, the RCC vice chairman affirmed that more than 25,000 scrutinizers, guides, and clerks will be utilized at election centers on election day and added that these persons have been trained on the tasks which will be assigned them in courses organized for this purpose.

'Izzat Ibrahim said instructions have been issued to the effect that each election center will cope with no more than 12,000 voters to enable the citizens to cast their votes easily during the fixed hours. He added: When the election centers were chosen, we took into account the voters' social status, the type of relations prevailing among the residents of the area, and the means of transportation available so it will be easy for voters to reach these centers when the election center is outside the administrative limits of the administrative unit.

He went on to say: We also were eager to make the election center well-known to voters, taking into account the suitability of that center in terms of capacity and spaciousness for casting votes.

Ibrahim Addresses Delegations on Constitution

JN3003190789 Baghdad INA in English 1800 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, Mar. 30, INA—Mr. 'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council today received here Arab and friendly delegations, now in Baghdad to attend next Saturday elections of the Iraqi National Assembly.

Speaking at the meeting, Mr. Ibrahim who is also chairman of the higher committee supervising the elections said that several central committees are currently engaged in preparing the projected new constitution which would include new transformations for promoting and deepening the democratic course.

He pointed out that the committee entrusted with hammering out the constitution made advanced steps along the path of preparing the draft constitution which comprises concepts related to the responsibility of the cabinet and its formation before the National Assembly, holding elections of the president of the Republic by the people and distribution of the executive and legislative powers.

Formation of Communist Party 'Will Not Be Allowed'

JN3003202889 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Hasan al-Kashif dispatch from Baghdad]

[Text] The Iraqis are preparing to elect their representatives to Parliament. On Saturday the elections will begin. Between 0800 and 2000 on Saturday 8 million voters will go the polls to elect 250 representatives. There are 953 candidates contesting the 250 seats. One quarter of the candidates are from the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, 93 candidates are tradesmen, half of the candidates carry high certificates, and 62 candidates are women.

The elected Iraqi Parliament or National Assembly will shoulder a big responsibility because it will discuss and endorse Iraq's permanent constitution. The draft constitution is being prepared now. The constitution will provide for party pluralism and freedom of press.

'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and chairman of the higher committee supervising the elections, held a news conference this morning. In this conference, Ibrahim shed light on the basic trends in the new constitution. He said the Council of Ministers will be responsible to the National Assembly, which will be given the power to withdraw confidence in the cabinet or in one of its ministers. The judiciary will enjoy a large degree of independence. He said the people will be given the freedom to form parties. However, parties such as the Iraqi Communist Party will not be allowed because it betrayed the homeland and stood on the side of the Iranian enemy against Iraq.

'Izzat Ibrahim disclosed the possibility of abolishing the RCC and distributing its powers among Parliament, the Council of Ministers, and the president of the Republic, who will be elected directly by the people and who will be responsible to the people in accordance with the coming new constitution. He affirmed that the new parliament will be a transitional stage in Iraq's political life. Its mission will end by endorsing the permanent constitutions that will lay down a democratic presidential system, according to the initial signs.

What increases the warmth of the elections is the abrogation of many resolutions dictated by the circumstances of war and the parties' refraining from binding those affiliated with them to choose a certain candidate. Dr Sa'dun Hammadi, speaker of the present National Assembly, was not nominated.

Meanwhile, the candidate lists include one member of the Ba'th Party Regional Command—Sa'di Mahdi Salih, the party official of the Baghdad city. This will make him a candidate for the chairmanship of the elected National Assembly. Meanwhile, Dr Sa'dun Hammadi is expected to be nominated for the post of Arab Cooperation Council secretary general.

RCC Crosses Out Names of 42 Election Candidates

JN3003211889 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2050 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, 30 Mar (INA)—The Revolution Command Council [RCC] has decided to cross out 42 names from the list of candidates for the National Assembly elections.

In a decision made here tonight, the RCC based crossing out the names on the candidates' inability to read or write according to Paragraph C, Article 1, Clause 14 of National Assembly ammended legislation No 55 of 1980.

Thus, in light of the RCC decision, 910 candidates are running for the National Assembly in 59 elctoral constituencies. [all figures as received]

Eliasson Confers With Delegation at UN

JN3003191489 Baghdad INA in English 1730 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] United Nations, March 30, INA—The personal representative of U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, Jan Eliasson, began a round of talks today with an Iraqi delegation today to discuss preparations for meetings at the ministerial level between Iraq and Iran to renew efforts to implement all aspects of Security Council Resolution 598 calling for a negotiated settlement of the Iraq-Iran conflict.

The Iraqi delegation included Iraqi Foreign Ministry Representative Dr. Riyadh al-Qaysi, Iraqi Ambassador to the U.N. 'Ismat Kittani and Iraqi Ambassador to Washington 'Abd al-Amir al-Anbari.

Mr. Eliasson is scheduled to meet with an Iranian delegation next week.

INA To Begin Transmitting Special ACC Cast

JN3003134889 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0850 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Excerpt] Baghdad, 30 Mar (INA)—As of next Sunday, 2 April, INA will begin transmitting a new cast under the name "Arab Cooperation Council [ACC] States Newscast."

INA Director General 'Adnan al-Jabburi said today the newscast will focus on the bright nature of the human cultural development in the ACC states—Egypt, Jordan, Yemen Arab Republic, and Iraq—and in a way that serves the Arab nation. [passage omitted]

Shamir on Proposal, Elections in Territories

TA3103075489 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 31 Mar 89 pp 1, 10

[Report by diplomatic correspondent Menahem Shalev]

[Excerpt] Prime Minister Shamir said yesterday that he will propose in Washington next week that Egypt and Jordan assist Israel in forming an appointed Palestinian delegation to peace talks, and that if this effort fails he will support the holding of elections in the territories.

Sources in the Prime Minister's office said that, while Shamir may ultimately favour elections in the territories, these would have to be "conditional on the definite target of negotiations on autonomy."

The prime minister, the sources added, believes that Egypt and Jordan will also have to lend a hand in the organization of elections.

"It should be clear that elections would be held for a very definite purpose," an aide to Shamir said, "Shamir will not allow them to be exploited for anything else."

In an interview with American journalists, Shamir said that his immediate objective is to get negotiations started. It would be counter-productive to discuss the outcome of the negotiations before they begin, he said.

Foreign Minister Arens has decided not to accompany Shamir on his 10-day trip to the U.S., which starts on Wednesday. Well-placed sources told THE JERUSALEM POST that Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will accompany Shamir to assist him in trying to counter Israel's negative image in the American media.

Shamir's bureau chief, Yosi Ahime'ir, categorically denied that the prime minister had agreed to a freeze on settlements in the territories. "There is no connection whatsoever between settlements and the peace process," Ahme'ir said.

He added, however, that, despite Israel's "undeniable right" to settlements, the prime minister was guided by "diplomatic, economic and other considerations" in specific plans for settlements. [passage omitted]

Views 'Peace Arrangements'

TA3103121589 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1105 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Interview with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir by political correspondent 'Oded Ben-'Ami; date and place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Ben-'Ami] Mr Prime Minister, the Americans asked you to send somebody from your office before your meetings in Washington next week in order to brief them about the ideas and issues you intend to raise with the heads of the U.S. Administration. Does this not contain an element of exerting pressure on Israel prior to this visit?

[Shamir] These are routine matters. It is natural for them to try to prepare such meetings as thoroughly as possible, in order to avoid surprises and be better prepared and thus obtain better results. I do not see anything wrong in this. The Cabinet secretary will arrive about 1 day before me and will perhaps help out with the work of the bureaus—both the U.S. and ours—in the days after the meetings.

[Ben-'Ami] Mr Shamir, if the Cabinet secretary is indeed leaving earlier to brief the administration about these ideas, can we also hear something about these ideas? Is it true that the framework of your ideas is that you will tell the Americans that your answer to a Palestinian state is no and that there is no room to discuss a dialogue between us and the PLO, but that there is room to discuss implementing an interim arrangement?

[Shamir] I think there is nothing outstanding or unusual here. This is our position; we are opposed to a Palestinian state. Israel cannot live with such a state in Eretz Yisra'el. There was never a Palestinian state here, and there will never be such a state. Naturally we are interested in peace arrangements and in coexistence with the Palestinian Arab population in the areas of Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. We have always been and are still in favor of interim arrangements as a first stage. We have never said—not even in the Camp David agreements—that we regard the interim arrangement as the end of negotiations and the end of the process of arrangements.

We consider it a necessary step on the path to solving the problems between us. In my opinion, we should concentrate on the first beginning of the process, on resuming the process of dialogue between us and both the Palestinian Arabs and the Arab states. We must not forget that the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the state of nonpeace or even the formal state of war which exists between us and the Arab states.

Shamir To Raise Sela' Case During U.S. Visit

TA3003212689 Jerusalem Television Service in Hebrew 2000 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The prime minister today conferred with Colonel Avi'em Sela', who was involved in the Jonathan Pollard spy case. This meeting was in anticipation of the prime minister's departure for the United States. The above was reported by our political correspondent. The United States continues to pressure Israel to block Col Sela''s promotion. As a result, his joining the El-Op electronics plant in Rehovot has been aborted. Our correspondent notes that Israel is taking action to ease the U.S. pressure, adding that recently deliberations at the highest political echelon have been held on the matter.

The prime minister will apparently raise Sela"s case when he visits the United States soon.

Qatzav Says Hungary To Hold Talks on Ties

TA3103074589 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 31 Mar 89 p A2

[Report by "special" correspondent in Budapest Tzvi Zinger]

[Text] The Hungarian Government will soon be prepared to start talks with Israel at the deputy foreign ministers level on the convening of full diplomatic relations between the two countries. This is the message Transport Minister Moshe Qatzav received yesterday in a meeting with Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy.

Minister Qatzav, who returned to Israel yesterday from his visit to Hungary, met with the Hungarian deputy prime minister at the parliament building in Budapest.

In a joint press conference by the Hungarian deputy prime minister and Minister Qatzav at the parliament building in Budapest, the deputy prime minister, who is the acting prime minister, said: We have no preconditions for the renewal of full diplomatic relations with Israel."

Polish Delegation Arrives for Trade Talks

TA3003200089 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1700 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] A delegation of members from the Polish Chamber of Commerce and other top businessmen has arrived in Israel to discuss expanding trade relations. Our correspondent Gadi Sukenik reports that the delegation members are guests of the Union of the Chambers of Commerce and the Polish interest office in Israel.

[Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 30 March reports that "trade between Israel and Poland amounts to approximately $8 million. Half of the Israeli exports to Poland are citrus extracts and chemicals."]

IDF Kills 2 'Terrorists' North of Security Zone

TA3103063389 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0600 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] Two terrorists were killed in a clash with an Israel Defense Forces [IDF] unit north of the security zone in southern Lebanon last night. Our force did not sustain any injuries. The IDF spokesman reports that an IDF unit was on patrol searching for terrorists north of the security zone last night when it encountered terrorists north of the village of Shukin in the western sector. Two terrorists were killed in the ensuing exchange of fire.

PLO 'Selecting' Territories Residents for Talks

TA3003145889 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 29 Mar 89 pp 1, 11

[Text] Palestinian sources in Cairo have been cited as saying that the PLO has begun selecting members for a delegation of residents of the occupied territories to enter into negotiations with Israel. The same sources affirmed that this is being undertaken in accordance with an agreement reached during the second round of U.S.-Palestinian talks in Tunis, and in the wake of pressures exerted by Egypt and Jordan on the PLO so that the first stage of negotiations can be held with a delegation from the occupied territories.

The sources added that the delegation will comprise unprominent figures from the occupied territories. In the second stage of the negotiations, Palestinians from outside will be invited to conduct the negotiations.

The sources noted that this is the only way in which Israel can be induced to agree to hold negotiations.

The same sources also indicated the possibility of a meeting at the end of next month in Cairo between PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

A PLO official was quoted as saying that during the second round of talks in Tunis, the Americans hinted that the United States was trying to bring about direct negotiations between Israel and the PLO. He added that "the Americans do not differentiate between Palestinians in the occupied territories and those outside."

Further on Incidents, Casualties in Territories

Firebombs Thrown in Jerusalem

TA3003124689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1200 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Excerpt] This morning three firebombs were thrown at a Border Police patrol in the village of Silwan in East Jerusalem. No one was hurt and no damage was caused. Two suspects were detained. Our police affairs correspondent Moshe Nussbaum adds that there have been several stone-throwing incidents and some roadblocks were erected in East Jerusalem.

A firebomb thrown at the Al-Taiyiba City Hall this morning caused no damage. Slogans were painted and PLO flags were hoisted in some Galilee villages.

In Kafr Kanna near Nazareth, two rallies were held this afternoon to mark Land Day. Our correspondent Yo'el Dar reports that order was kept and that the police were positioned at the entrance to the village. [passage omitted]

Officer Kills Arab 'Assailant'

TA3003132589 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1300 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Excerpt] An Arab youth who was about to throw a stone at an Israel Defense Forces [IDF] officer, was shot dead in the village of Shuwaykah near Tulkarm. Military sources told our correspondent Arye Gus that the commander of an IDF unit, on a routine patrol, found himself in mortal danger when a youth ambushed him in a narrow alley and attempted to throw a large stone at him from close range. The officer opened fire, killing the assailant.

Four Arab residents were injured in a clash with IDF soldiers in Hebron. In the village of Qusrah, east of Nabulus, youths marched in a procession, blocking the road. They stoned an Israeli car, shattering its windshield. The car driver fired his gun, but there were no injuries. [passage omitted]

IDF Reports 24 Wounded 30 Mar

TA3003185389 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1730 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] A resident of Al-Jib died today of his injuries. This was reported from the hospital in Ramallah. The Army is investigating the circumstances of his death. Official Army sources told our correspondent 'Ido Shargil that 24 Arabs were wounded during disturbances in the territories today.

Land Day Events Reviewed

TA3003212289 Jerusalem Television Service in Hebrew 2000 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Excerpts] There was a general strike in Judaea and Samaria today. Beginning tonight, traffic from the territories into Israel will again be permitted. Our correspondent Beni Liss toured Ramallah and Nabulus today.

[Begin videorecording] It is now 18 months minus 1 week [as heard] since the outbreak of the uprising. Today's events, consequently, can hardly be attributed to Land Day. The leaflets have called on the locals to clash with the security forces to express solidarity with and support for the Israeli Arabs' struggle. Only in a few villages did the youths dare to fly the PLO flag and burn tires. The Israel Defense Forces [IDF] ignored these incidents as long as they took place in the villages themselves. The youths grew bolder and blocked the Nabulus-Jerusalem highway with a barricade. Within minutes IDF patrols arrived on the scene, dispersing the youths in every direction.

Contrary to the call in the leaflets, the Nabulus population did not go out to demonstrate and clash with the IDF. The streets were completely deserted. The inhabitants chose to remain indoors, which greatly helped the IDF soldiers maintain public order. Even the casbah was completely quiet, with the markets closed and very few cars traveling nearby. The Army conducted a lot of patrols, whether in vehicles or on foot, and put up many barricades. The military echelon was determined not to permit people to gather in order to demonstrate under any circumstances.

The senior military echelon has already learned that the leaflets have only a very limited impact on the residents, who hardly heed them. Throughout last night, Fatah graffiti urging the locals to march out and demonstrate was painted all over. Yet we saw dozens of locals erasing them for many long hours.

The Bayta inhabitants went back to their old habits. We saw such scenes during the initial stages of the uprising: Roadblocks which stretched for kilometers on end, by which the locals declared their autonomy. This village, which has experienced the IDF's harsh measures including a closure, an extended curfew, deportations, long detentions, house demolitions, and orchard uprootings, cordoned itself off just like in the early stages of the uprising 16 months ago. [passage omitted] [end recording]

A Border Police unit which patrolled Wadi Ma'li in Bethlehem this morning was attacked by masked individuals. The policemen fired in the air. One of the assailants was hurt and fled.

This afternoon four Molotov cocktails were hurled at Border Police units in Silwan and East Jerusalem. They ignited on the road, but no one was hurt and no damage was caused.

Our correspondent Uri Kohen-Aharonov reports that most of the large police reinforcements brought in to East Jerusalem today did not encounter any outstanding events. There was a full commercial and school strike in East Jerusalem. Most businesses along East Jerusalem's Al-Sultan Sulayman and Salah al-Din Streets, and Nabulus Road were idle. It seems that most of the inhabitants decided to stay indoors, enforcing a self-imposed curfew.

In the villages and Arab neighborhoods around the city, as well as inside the Old City walls, approximately 20 cases of stone-throwing and road-blocking were reported. In some of them the police used tear gas and there were several detentions. [passage omitted]

General Curfew on Gaza Lifted

TA3103054589 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0500 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] The general curfew on the Gaza Strip has been lifted. The curfew was imposed on Wednesday to prevent clashes with the Arab population on Land Day. Our correspondent reports, however, that the curfew on the Al-Shati', Jabalyah, Al-Nusayrat, and Khan Yunus refugee camps, on Dayr al-Balah, and on various neighborhoods in Gaza and Rafah remains in effect.

Update on W. Bank Curfews

TA3103082489 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0800 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] The curfew on Janin and the adjoining refugee camp, as well as on the village of Shuwaykah, in which a youth who tried to attack an Israel Defense Forces officer was shot yesterday, was lifted this morning.

Our correspondent Arye Gus reports that the curfew on the towns of Tulkarm and Salfit, as well as on the refugee camps in the area of Tulkarm and Nabulus, remains in effect.

Palestinians Say 3 Men Killed

TA3103093889 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 31 Mar 89 pp 1, 22

[Report by Joel Greenberg]

[Excerpts] Troops shot and killed two Palestinians yesterday and wounded at least 50 during heavy clashes that swept the West Bank as Palestinians demonstrated solidarity with Israeli Arabs on Land Day.

The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] confirmed 26 of the wounded reported by Palestinians and hospital officials.

Palestinians said a third man was killed in the Gaza Strip, but the IDF said he was slain in a family feud. The entire Strip remains under curfew.

Clashes were reported in scores of villages and towns throughout the West Bank, where the casualty toll was one of the highest in months. The violence contrasted sharply with peaceful Arab protests inside Israel.

Most of the unrest was in outlying areas, as a heavy troop presence and curfews stifled protest in cities and surrounding refugee camps.

In Ramallah and Nabulus, soldiers ordered residents out to remove dozens of Palestinian flags and paint over nationalist graffiti. The general strike left streets deserted and the cities looking like ghost-towns.

The IDF closed the West Bank to free press coverage, permitting access only to reporters with an escort from the military spokesman's office.

About 20 casualties were reported in the Hebron area, where Palestinians said violence was provoked by vigilante car-patrols by settlers. Kakh supporters from Hebron announced this week that they would drive through villages on Land Day in order to apprehend stone-throwers. [passage omitted]

In the Gaza Strip, Nasir Khalid Nasir, 24, was shot in the chest during a stone-throwing clash at the Jabalyah refugee camp, Palestinians said. A doctor in Al-Shifa' Hospital told THE JERUSALEM POST that Nasir arrived at the hospital dead from a gun-shot wound.

The IDF spokesman said Nasir was killed in a family feud, but could not give more details.

In Hebron, seven persons were reported wounded in heavy clashes with troops and settlers following a march by demonstrators. Reports from the town said a confrontation developed near Al-Ahali Hospital between settlers and relatives of wounded. The settlers opened fire, and 30-year-old Awad 'Amir was critically wounded in the head, Palestinians said. Casualties were also reported in communities surrounding Hebron, where Palestinians said tensions were heightened by the Kakh vigilante patrols. According to the Palestinian reports, seven persons were wounded at Bayt Immar, six at Husan, five in Halhul, and four at Bani Na'im.

At Yattab, bodyguards of Mayor Isma'il Abu Ahmad wounded four persons, one of them critically, when they opened fire at marchers who pelted the municipality building with rocks and petrol bombs, Palestinians said. The building was apparently attacked because it opened for business in violation of the general strike. The IDF confirmed the incident, and said protesters had attempted to set fire to the building.

Two persons were reported wounded in clashes in Bethlehem, one was wounded in Bayt Sahur, and one in Jericho. [passage omitted]

10 Injured in Communist-Islamic Fight in Galilee

TA3003183689 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1700 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Our correspondent in the north Menahem Horovitz reports that 10 people were injured this evening in a fight that broke out in Deir Hanna as the main demonstration marking Land Day in the Galilee ended. Activists of the Islamic Movement swapped punches with representatives of the New Communist List [RAKAH] and other movements over ideological issues. Some of the injured were taken to the hospital.

Bomb Explodes in Petah Tiqva; No Injuries

TA3103100789 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0930 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] An explosive charge went off in Petah Tiqva this morning, but there were no injuries. Our correspondent reports that at approximately 1030 an explosion was heard at 3 Rabbi 'Aqiva Street in Petah Tiqva. Large police forces were alerted to the spot. The sappers ascertained that the explosion was caused by an explosive charge. There were no injuries and no damage was caused. The police launched an investigation.

Central Bank Requests 'Urgent Loan' From IMF

JN3103112889 Kuwait AL-QABAS in Arabic 29 Mar 89 p 15

[Text] High-level talks between Jordan and an IMF delegation began in Amman yesterday in an attempt to overcome the financial crisis which necessitates that Jordanian debts be rescheduled.

Mahir Shukri, deputy governor of the Central Bank of Jordan, has said Jordan is requesting an "urgent loan" but he declined to give further details. The current talks in Amman focus on approval of figures and on an attempt to find a basis to define policies between Jordan and the IMF. According to Shukri, official discussions will begin in the next few days. Shukri expected the talks with the IMF to conclude before the end of next week. Jordan is scheduled to pay $1.2 billion of its debts this year. Jordan's debts total approximately $6 billion. Muhammad Ya'qub, deputy director of the IMF's Middle East branch, joined the IMF delegation in the talks with the Jordanian Government.

Planning Minister Tahir Kan'an said the talks with the IMF are part of the annual consultations. However, the talks this time are of great importance due to the current crisis, he added. Kan'an said the "rumors" about the IMF's proposal to Jordan that the dinar's value be cut and that the subsidization of food commodities be canceled are untrue and based on a misunderstanding of the situation.

He asserted that Jordan adopted the necessary measures once the financial crisis occurred and that the IMF will find no problem with these measures. Kan'an added that the talks basically focus on the budget deficit and not on the details of policies such as the subsidization of food commodities. He said Jordan will be committed to the payment of i's debts until they are officially rescheduled by the IMF.

Al-Rifa'i Receives U.S. Congressman Owens

JN3003142989 Amman Domestic Service in English 1200 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The prime minister, Mr Zayd al-Rifa'i, conferred at his office this morning with U.S. Congressman Mr Wayne Owens. Discussions during the meeting dealt with developments in the Middle East, peace efforts, and bilateral relations between Jordan and the United States.

King Receives Congressman Owens

JN3003202289 Amman Television Service in English 2000 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn received at the Royal Court this afternoon U.S. Congressman Wayne Owens, who is now on a visit to Jordan. They reviewed current efforts for the establishment of a Middle East peace through an international peace conference.

ACC States Reach Agreement on Opening Airspace

JN2803091089 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 28 Mar 89 p 1

[Text] Amman (PETRA, J.T.)—The four countries of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) have agreed to open their airspace for each other and to consider air travel between them as part of domestic flights, taking place within the same country.

The announcement was made by Royal Jordanian Chairman and Chief Executive Officer 'Ali Ghandur upon returning here from a meeting in Cairo with heads of civil aviation authorities and national airlines of Egypt, North Yemen and Iraq, the other three ACC partners.

Ghandur said that the four countries also agreed to maintain close coordination among their respective airlines, especially in air fares, with a view to encouraging citizens from the four countries to travel by air via the respective airlines.

The meeting took measures to promote and increase air traffic between the four ACC countries, he said.

According to Ghandur, the four parties to the meeting discussed unifying the types of their aircraft to pave the way for training their pilots and maintenance engineers, which in turn would reduce the cost of maintaining the aircraft.

The meeting discussed ways to operate joint flights on long-distance routes, such as Australia, North and South America and the Far East, to cut down on cost, and to introduce measures facilitating air travel among the capitals of the four countries on any of the national airlines, Ghandur noted.

He said further meetings will be held through sub-committees in a week's time to formulate ideas that can be adopted in this respect. Reports on the findings will be referred to the ACC summit meeting, Ghandur added.

Phalange Party Leader Sa'adah on Security, Syria

JN3003183389 Kuwait AL-ANBA' in Arabic
29 Mar 89 p 25

[Interview with George Sa'adah, Phalange Party leader and chairman of the Lebanese Front, by 'Umar Sabahi in Beirut; date not given]

[Text] [Sabahi] You earlier invited the Arab committee to come to Beirut to meet with officials here. Do you still adhere to this stand and why?

[Sa'adah] We hoped that the committee would come to Lebanon to meet with the Lebanese leaders. We did not want those leaders to go to Arab countries to present their views. In Lebanon, the committee can listen to whomever it wants and invite whomever it wishes instead of facing the problems of the invitations, names, and arguments on this issue. What is taking place in Lebanon urgently calls for expediting the work and moves of the committee. The situation calls on the committee to come to Lebanon to closely supervise what is taking place and closely tackle the problems and issues from inside, not outside, so that it can reach the required result. Since the committee's move will always be faced with military escalation, as the case is today, it will be better for the commitee to deal with this fact in a clearer way.

[Sabahi] How do you explain the coincidence of the military flareup with the meetings of the Arab committee?

[Sa'adah] Some people might have thought that the Arab League is serious in reaching a solution in Lebanon. This did not please them; they want the situation to continue as it is. They want the Lebanese card to remain a card for blackmail, so they obstructed things. Hence, they obstructed things through [military] escalation because they beleieve that the political obstruction will be useless.

[Sabahi] In your opinion, what is required from the Arab committee now?

[Sa'adah] I believe that the Arabs can play an effective role if they decide to do so. They can stop the present bloodshed. They can resort to many things beginning with pressuring the Lebanese and then those who are behind them. The Lebanese crisis has become known to everybody, particularly the Arab League. If the Arab League has not been able, until now, to know this crisis, then how bad the Arabs are and how bad the Arab League is.... And if the Arab brothers have not yet known the cause of Lebanon, the founding member of the Arab League, how can they tackle this cause?

In my opinion the crisis is known. It is not only a domestic crisis; it is a problem between a large group of Lebanese on one hand and the Syrians on the other. The Arab League should understand from Syria what it wants from Lebanon. It should convey a picture of the reality of the Syrian will. Then we can say that we can give Syria what it wants from Lebanon.

Hence, I see that the credibility of the Arab League is facing a test in Lebanon now. I would like to say here that the Arabs in their many countries are grouped in many councils and blocs—the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab Cooperation Council, and the Arab Maghreb Union. These councils must be taken into consideration to lay down sound bases for the relationship between Syria and Lebanon because Syria and Lebanon, as well as a few Arab countries on the edge of the Arab homeland, are the only ones left outside these councils.

[Sabahi] If relations with Syria is seriously discussed and the Arab committee plays its role in this regard, how do you think the Christians in Lebanon should deal with this?

[Sa'adah] It is natural for there to be a clear relationship between Lebanon and Syria. For a long time, we have been saying that this relationship must be based on clarity, consistency, and honesty. It is common sense that the relationship between two countries cannot be based on the Syrian regime's relationship with some Lebanese factions. Hence, the relationship must be discussed and negotiated between the legitimate powers in both countries. The current government in Lebanon is provisional and recognized only by some Lebanese. In this case, presidential elections should be held as soon as possible to elect a new president, then a national unity government should be formed to hold the required negotiations with Syria and arrange the relationship with it.

Hence, we favor a relationship with Syria and do not deny that in light of neighborhood, the relations between Syria and Lebanon differ from any of the existing relations between Lebanon and any other Arab country. To reach a relationship of this type, there must be an end to the occasional proposals that appease some Lebanese factions and displease others. On the other hand, Syria should deal with Lebanon as any other neighboring country does. As you know, there is continuing dialogue among many neighboring Arab countries, the example of which we can follow. But to say that we are one people in two countries and the Lebanese entity is made-up, these are old cliches we used to hear many years ago. Now we hear them again whenever relations between the two countries become tense.

Lebanon is an independent state that has its own borders and entity. It has all bases of a state, as does Syria. The Syrians have to deal with Lebanon on this basis. Otherwise, looking for solutions will be futile.

[Sabahi] We understand from this that the issue of relations with Syria is postponed until after the presidential elections?

[Sa'adah] The absolute priority is the presidential elections. He who obstructs elections reaches a deadend.

[Sabahi] General 'Awn raised the slogan: Liberation before elections. Liberation means Syrian withdrawal. On the other hand, you call for elections in preparation for negotiating relations with Syria, including the withdrawal?

[Sa'adah] Lebanon cannot be liberated and no reforms can be made as long as there is no president and no legitimate government. If there is liberation, it is this government that will seek and demand it. If there are reforms to be made, it is this government that should carry out these reforms. This is the natural, realistic, and logical approach. If the Arabs want to help Lebanon, they must work to secure the election of new president and the formation of a new government. Here the Arab League plays a role as a mediator to solve the complicated issues.

[Sabahi] What, in your opinion, is the reason for moving the invitation programs to Tunis, considering that you were one of the invitees?

[Sa'adah] In my opinion, the reasons go back to the external interferences. It is as if the reference of the Lebanese leaderships has been placed in this Arab country or that. With all due respect to the fraternal and friendly Arab countries, the Lebanese leaderships' decisions should be Lebanese. These leaderships should represent the interests of the Lebanese only. In my opinion, the first round of meetings should have been enough; that is, listening to President General 'Awn and Presidents al-Huss and Al-Husayni only. There is no justification for meeting with the religious heads.

Therefore, the successive stages of meetings should be ignored because they went into the details of representations and invitations. It is unfortunate that the invitations to the meetings, as we saw, proceded from the secterian concept at a time when we see all proposals calling for a cancellation of secterianism in Lebanon. How can we call for cancelling political secretarianism and at the same time issue invitations to meet with the committee on a secterian basis?

[Sabahi] How do you summarize the political proposition that should be adopted to get out of the present tunnel?

[Sa'adah] First, by calming down the security situation; second, by electing a president for the Republic; third, by agreeing over the constitutional reforms; and fourth, through relations with Syria.

These have to occur if we want to save Lebanon. However, if we want to have initiatives like the previous ones to bide time, then why waste time and tire out the Lebanese?

[Sabahi] Where does the issue of evacuating the Syrian Army stand when discussing the issue of evacuating non-Lebanese forces?

[Sa'adah] If we are demanding the withdrawal of the Syrian Army from Lebanon, then naturally first and more importantly we should demand the withdrawal of the Israeli Army, since there is a war between Lebanon and Israel that is still going on and a relationship governed by the armistice treaty. In my opinion, the priority is Israeli withdrawal. This was clear in the Bkirki statement. For a long time, we have been demanding the implementation of the resolutions issued by the Security Council on the Israeli Army's withdrawal. Our demand is clear and frank. Only the Lebanese Army and internal security [forces] should remain on Lebanese territory. If we need any security support for a certain period of time, then the legitimate Lebanese authorities will decide who to turn to.

[Sabahi] What action should be taken for the withdrawal of the Israelis?

[Sa'adah] We call on the international community to apply pressure on this matter. When we call for spreading the state's sovereignty on all Lebanese territories, they link Syrian evacuation to Israeli evacuation. We urge and ask all foreign countries, especially the Arab countries, to help us get the Israelis out of Lebanon. If there are any difficulties hampering the evacuation of the Israeli Army, this should not mean that Lebanon's borders should be encroached on by any fraternal or nonfraternal country. As I said, we will demand all forums and countries to pressure Israel to withdraw in preparation for the evacuation of the Syrian Army.

[Sabahi] It has been noted that the statement issued at the recent Christian meeting in Bkirki, which you attended, was somehow different from Gen 'Awn's stands, particularly on Syria. How do you explain this?

[Sa'adah] Naturally, the Bkirki stand is different because those who met in Bkirki were politicians. We know that politicians have their own language, Bkirki has its own language, and military men have their own language. However, no one has violated the basic principles and red lines. They have all adhered to the principles and constants. In the Bkirki statement, the emphasis was on the implementation of the resolutions of the international and Arab forums. I do not believe that there is a single Lebanese who accepts having his territory encroached upon by any foreign army, be it friend or enemy.

[Sabahi] Do you believe that the security situation will get worse?

[Sa'adah] There are many wise men, and they are treating the situation logically. However, what I fear is that if the daily shelling of the eastern areas continues, the situation will worsen and deteriorate because there are limits to patience. Then it will be natural to repond and matters will explode. What is required now is self-restraint so that we do not reach that danger.

[Sabahi] What is the effect of the ports issue on the resulting escalation?

[Sa'adah] The issue is not that of ports or facilities. The issue is for the state to be or not to be, for legitimacy to be or not to be. The statements, which have been coming out for some time, were calling on Gen 'Awn to recover the ports. When he closed the fifth dockyard of the Lebanese Forces and demanded the abolition of all other illegitimate ports, all hell broke loose. Here, there may be some who do not understand the real issue. Gen 'Awn did not demand the closure of all ports in other areas. He said there are two legitimate ports in East Beirut—Beirut and Juniyah—and that there are three legitimate ports in the other areas—Tripoli, Sidon, and Tyre.

Therefore, the issue is that of economic blockade; the issue is for the state to be. [sentence as published] Regrettably, the issue was placed within a personal framework, and it is regrettable that personal scores have led to these things. If it were an issue of supplies, then those who fear a supply crisis could import them through the legitimate ports.

Defense Authorities Fight Fire in Al-Dawrah Depot

NC3003062389 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0415 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Excerpts] The competent organs of the civil defense authority are continuing to combat the fire in the Al-Dawrah gas depot [in East Beirut] to contain it and to prevent any damage that might threaten those living nearby.

These organs have asked the citizens to stay away from the area temporarily as a precautionary measure. All citizens are asked not to use Al-Dawrah Highway in order to facilitate the damage prevention work. We call on the citizens not to heed the rumors and reports that some people are trying to exaggerate for well-known purposes. We call on them to follow up the developments through the media.

The fire has encircled some elements [not further identified] and their vehicles during the night and some of them received burns.

On the other hand, the clashes began to abate at 2300 yesterday while intermittent shelling continued in the Suq al-Gharb and the markets areas. [passage omitted]

REUTER has cited security sources as saying that the Syrian forces shelled the eastern areas despite the appeal by the Arab League for a cease-fire. It added that the violent shelling of Eastern Beirut followed the press conference held by Prime Minister General Michel 'Awn.

More on Gas Depot Explosion

NC3003091989 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0815 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Excerpts] There was a new Syrian gift for the Lebanese this morning when a big explosion rocked Beirut and its suburbs and most of the surrounding areas. It resulted from the explosion of a gas depot in the Al-Dawrah area [in Eastern Beirut]. A huge orange ball of fire rose and soon turned into smoke clouds over Eastern Beirut and its suburbs.

Eyewitnesses said that the explosion was like an earthquake and caused huge property damage. The inhabitants of Sidon, which is 40 km south of Beirut, reported that they heard the explosion.

Heat from the fire caused the explosion which blew the lid off the huge tank sending large clouds of gas into the air some of which ignited. [passage omitted]

A number of citizens were wounded from the flying pieces of glass and the pressure caused by the explosion.

'Awn's Cabinet on Explosion

NC3003130089 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1145 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The Council of Ministers has issued the following statement: The Council of Ministers held an emergency extraordinary meeting under the chairmanship of General Michel 'Awn before noon today. The Council of Ministers studied the dimensions of the disaster which the Syrian criminal shelling has caused to vital installations, particularly the fuel and gas depots in the Al-Dawrah area, and decided the following:

One, to take urgent precautionary measures to avoid any further dangers which may happen as a result of the continuation of the fire, and to take urgent measures to contain the damage and repercussions on the social and economic levels and to public safety.

Two, to address an urgent appeal to the Arab League to send the Arab good offices committee to Lebanon so that it can shoulder its responsibility on the basis of the current state of affairs and after seeing the war of annihilation which the Syrian occupation forces are continuing to launch against the Lebanese Forces. These forces must not be allowed to stay in Lebanon any longer after the massacres they committed against all the Lebanese from the various sects and creeds.

Three, to appeal to the institutions, organizations, and associations concerned with the aftermath of the disaster of the explosion of the fuel and gas storage tanks to assume their responsibility toward this barbaric Syrian crime and thus stop it and halt any further damage.

78 Wounded by Explosion

NC3003181589 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] A total of 78 people were wounded by the fuel tank explosion in Al-Dawrah today. [passage omitted]

Firemen and civil defense personnel are still trying to control the fires which have broken out in the fuel tanks and to prevent them from spreading to other tanks in Al-Dawrah. The fires have caused a huge cloud of smoke to spread as far as Cyprus. [passage omitted]

[In a related report, Paris AFP in English at 1737 GMT on 30 March notes that in Beirut, "the night promised to be even blacker than usual, since a flying fragment of the storage tank severed the last high-tension line feeding Beirut with electricity."]

Syrian Ship Headed for Tartus Diverted to Beirut

NC3003105689 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Citing Arab diplomatic sources, AFP reported that a Syrian freighter has disappeared after leaving Larnaca port, southern Cyprus, on Monday enroute to Syria.

The same sources said that the freighter "Maysalun," owned by a Syrian national called 'Abd al-Rahman Hijazi, set off from Larnaca port at 1800 on Monday for Tartus port. They added that the ship was intercepted outside Cyprus' territorial waters and diverted to Beirut.

A spokesman for the (Sitol) Chartering Company which manages the Syrian ship said that the freighter is now anchored off Beirut Port.

Army Command on Diverted Vessel

NC3003160589 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The Army Command Guidance Directorate has issued a statement saying that at 0230 on 28 March 1989, the joint naval operation room was notified by the naval forces' vessels that the Syrian ship "Maysalun" was 9 miles off Tripoli's shore. The ship's position was not legal, according to the maritime transport authority. The naval forces diverted the ship to Beirut Port, just as they divert any ship violating laws. The joint naval operations room requested all competent departments to take the necessary action within their jurisdictions.

The Army Command statement said that the Customs Department seized the ship's papers and that the issue has been referred to the maritime transport authority for a decision. The issue of the ship will be settled as soon as legal action is taken and the fines due are paid.

AFP cites an official in the naval operations room as saying that the ship was intercepted in Lebanese territorial waters and that investigations showed it was heading from Larnaca to Tartus. The maritime transport department is checking whether the ship's route was in international shipping lanes. The source confirmed that if the checks show appropriate results, the ship will be allowed to continue its voyage very soon.

[Paris AFP in English, in a related report at 1526 GMT on 30 March, adds: "The owners of the cargo, the Peletico Company of Cyprus, have protested the incident in a letter to the Lebanese Embassy in Nicosia, Arab diplomats said in the Cypriot capital."]

Unidentified Naval Gunboat Spotted Off Coast

NC3003141389 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1400 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] An Amal Movement security source has stated that a naval gunboat was spotted off the Al-Awza'i shore at noon today but that the responsible people could not identify it.

Beirut Radio on Fighting, Israeli Overflights

NC3003170389 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The military escalation on the traditional combat lines this morning has lessened. Only sporadic gunfire took place on the combat lines in the mountain, Beirut, and the southern suburb.

Reports say artillery shells fell on Kasrawan Coast between 0900 and 1000 today. A boy named Shehadah Rahmah was killed, and Dhiyalah Rahmah, Elie Zughayb, Pauline Zughayb, and a Thai national were wounded.

Shells fell on Beirut Port and the Kasrawan Coast between 1500 and 1530 today.

In another development, an Amal Movement security source has stated that a military gunboat was spotted off the Al-Awza'i shore. Gunfire was directed at it, and the boat sailed off into the high seas.

Meanwhile, Israeli helicopters flew over 'Arab Salim, Jarju', Al-Luwayzah, and 'Ayn bu Siwar at 1130 today. An Israeli warplane formation also flew over the south and east of Sidon.

USSR Defense Minister Meets With Al-Asad

JN3003135389 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1215 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received at 1100 today USSR Defense Minister Army General Dimitriy Yazov and his delegation. The meeting was attended by General Mustafa Talas, deputy commander in chief, deputy prime minister, and defense minister; and the Soviet ambassador in Damascus, Aleksandr Zotov.

Further on Meeting

JN3003172089 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received at 1100 today USSR Defense Minister Army General Dimitriy Yazov and his delegation. The meeting was attended by General Mustafa Talas, deputy commander in chief, deputy prime minister, and defense minister; and the Soviet ambassador in Damascus, Aleksandr Zotov.

Gen Yazov conveyed to the president the greetings of Soviet Chairman Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet leadership. The president accepted them and asked Gen Yazov to convey his greetings and wishes to Chairman Gorbachev, the Soviet leadership, and the people of the friendly Soviet Union. During the meeting, the discussion revolved around the international situation, the situation in the Middle East, and issues of mutual interest in various fields.

Gen Yazov expressed the Soviet Union's appreciation for the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries, Syria's policy, and Syria's constructive role in working for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and in defending Syria's achievements and national and pan-Arab interests.

Gen Yazov said the Soviet Union sees relations with Syria in light of their importance for both sides, their perpetuation and continuation, and their being free from any short-term demands or factors. Gen Yazov stressed the Soviet Union's eagerness to continue consultations and coordination between the two sides in various issues of mutual interest.

The president expressed satisfaction with the development of relations and cooperation between Syria and the Soviet Union. He stressed the strategic importance of bilateral relations and the importance of bilateral cooperation and coordination in working for a durable and just peace in the Middle East. He stressed the importance of confronting those maneuvers that are keeping the situation in the region tense. He stressed that efforts are being made to tackle this situation in line with the spirit of relaxation in international relations and peoples' right to sovereignty and self-determination.

Concludes Visit, Departs

JN3003200189 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1915 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] USSR Defense Minister Army General Dimitriy Yazov and his delegation left Damascus this afternoon following a visit of several days. He was seen off at Damascus International Airport by General Mustafa Talas, deputy commander in chief of the Army and Armed Forces, deputy prime minister, and defense minister; General 'Ali Aslan and General Hasan Turkumani, deputies to the chief of staff of the Army and Armed Forces; a number of senior General Command officers; and the USSR ambassador in Damascus.

Earlier today, the guest minister visited the War Museum. He observed its halls and the weapons, heritage, and war spoils they contain. He expressed his admiration in the comment he wrote in the visitors record. He said in his note: I became familiar with the War Museum in Syria, which preserves the past of the Syrian strugglers and serves the work of preparing nationalist strugglers now. He wished those working in the museum progress and success in their esteemed mission. He was welcomed and seen off with hospitality and respect.

Al-Shar' on Islamic Conference, U.S. Diplomats

PM2803103289 London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 24 Mar 89 p 24

[Unattributed report on an interview with Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' in Riyadh; date not given]

[Text] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' praised the Islamic Conference Organization's results and described it as a total success. He said that a positive atmosphere dominated the discussions, and the Syrian delegation is satisfied with the results achieved and their effect on Islamic solidarity.

Al-Shar' said: Islamic solidarity, which the custodian of the two holy mosques affirmed in his address and which we asserted in Syria's address to the conference, must reflect positively on Arab solidarity at this stage in order for the Arabs to strengthen their position and their unity, benefit from their capabilities, and unite their political positions, particularly in the face of Israeli intransigence and rigidity. On recent developments on the Palestinian issue and the six-man committee's role, the Syrian foreign minister said: We in Syria have emphasized our commitment to and support for the six-man committee. We will cooperate by providing every kind of positive support to extricate Lebanon from its predicament, which has continued for many years. We believe that the committee has so far taken positive steps which will assist a rapprochement of Lebanese viewpoints for the sake of national accord. Unfortunately, however, it seems that some people in East Beirut fear the achievement of political reforms and national accord in Lebanon, and for this reason they have taken provocative

measures such as closing and besieging national ports and closing Beirut Airport. This is in addition to the bloodthirsty shelling of West Beirut which is causing heavy human and material losses.

On Syria's position on the Iraq-Iran situation after the cease-fire between the two countries, Al-Shar' said: We in Syria hope that Resolution 598 will be implemented in full. We also hope that the two neighboring countries will reach a final agreement on the implementation of that resolution.

Asked by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT whether Syrian-Egyptian relations will be resumed in the near future, the Syrian foreign minister said: That subject requires deep discussion and consideration because we are bound to Egypt by deep-rooted, historic relations. Both we and the Egyptian people entered the October war against the Zionist enemy. Israel used to carry out continual attacks on both Egypt and Syria, as happened in 1967. Syria and Egypt were the first two states to establish unity between them. So Egyptian-Syrian relations are no ordinary relations or a mere exchange of diplomatic representation. They must be established on strong foundations and firm principles that will have a positive impact on the vital interests of the Egyptian and Syrian peoples and the Arab nation. Numerous endeavors are being made to clear the Arab atmosphere, but so far they have produced no results.

On the international peace conference and the possibility of its being convened, Al-Shar' said: We believe that in order to achieve peace the conference's first task must be to secure Israel's complete withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and to uphold the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, including their right to establish their own independent Palestinian state and their right to self-determination.

On the detention of two U.S. diplomats in Syria, the Syrian minister said: Syria issued a statement on that matter but unfortunately the U.S. Administration has not yet provided Syria with any convincing clarifications about the presence of the U.S. military attache and his assistant in a place where they should have not been. We are awaiting those clarifications. Anyhow, the United States and Syria are anxious not to let relations reach the point of no return. As I said, Syria awaits U.S. clarifications.

Liberation Movements Meet for Talks in Damascus

JN3003101589 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1915 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] Damascus—The liberation movements which have a presence in the Syrian arena held a meeting today at the invitation of the Palestine National Salvation Front on the occasion of Land Day tomorrow. During this meeting, they discussed developments on the Palestinian, Arab, and international level.

Colonel Sa'id Musa, Abu Musa, secretary of the Fatah uprising movement, spoke about the Palestinian state of affairs. He stressed the need to protect the pan-Arab cause, support the Palestinian Arab people's intifadah [uprising] in the occupied territories, and foil the defeatist calls for aborting the intifadah. Col Abu Musa praised the Syrian Arab position which supports the forces of Arab liberation, and condemned the destabilization of the situation in Lebanon at the hands of the Zionized gangs. He called for supporting the Lebanese Nationalist Movement, and praised Syria's pan-Arab role in Lebanon under President Hafiz al-Asad.

In'am Ra'd spoke on behalf of the Lebanese Nationalist Movement. He explained the perils and dimensions of the eruption of the situation that is currently taking place in the Lebanese arena by the Zionized cliques which are backed by Saddam Husayn's regime. Ra'd affirmed that the Lebanese cause is of the utmost importance to all Arab nationalists. He praised Syria's pan-Arab role in Lebanon and its position on the Palestinian cause under President Hafiz al-Asad.

The conferees issued a statement condemning the serious and humiliating concessions by the defeatist trend which strongly desires the mirage of a peaceful solution. They voiced their full support for the Palestinian people's intifadah against the Israeli occupation. The conferees also voiced their solidarity with the Lebanese people in their legitimate confrontation of the isolationists-Zionist scheme, and denounced 'Awn's claims that the conflict is a Syrian-Lebanese conflict. They condemned the overt interference by Saddam's fascist regime and its support for the 'Awn clique which coldbloodedly is setting the Lebanese territory, people, and destiny on fire.

The liberation movements praised the courageous pan-Arab role of Al-Asad's Syria in Lebanon which seeks to protect the Lebanese territory, people, and Arab affiliation.

People's Assembly Approves Draft Resolutions

JN2903212989 Damascus Television Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 29 Mar 89

[All companies' names as heard]

[Text] The People's Assembly this evening held a session under Assembly Speaker 'Abd al-Qadir Qaddurah with the attendance of a number of ministers. The assembly discussed the reports of the Planning and Production Committee and the Arab and Foreign Affairs Committee on the draft resolution stipulating the ratification of the agreement signed by the sides to the two contracts to prospect, develop, and produce oil.

The assembly also discussed the report on the draft resolution stipulating the ratification of the working program for 1989 and 1990 and the draft contract attached to it, which has been signed with the Hungarian Government in implementation of the Scientific and

Technical Accord. The report on the draft resolution stipulating the ratification of the exchanged letters regarding the scientific and technical cooperation between Syria and the GDR for 1988 and 1989 was also reviewed.

The assembly also examined the report on the draft resolution stipulating the ratification of the attached agreement, which has been signed in Damascus, between the Syrian Government and the Syrian Oil Company and the natural gas contractor consortium, which constitutes the Shell-Syria for Oil Development Company, Decten-Syria Gas Company, and Dimnex-Syria Gas Company for the exploitation of Gas. The report on the draft resolution stipulating the ratification of the contract between the Syrian Government and the Syrian Oil Company and the Unical-Al-Hasakah Limited Company regarding the prospecting, developing, and production of oil was discussed by the assembly. Also reviewed by the assembly was the report on the draft resolution which stipulates the ratification of the two documents signed with the Japanese Export and Import Bank with their appendixes.

Dr Sabah Baqjaji, minister of state for planning affairs; Dr Antonios Habib, minister of oil and mineral wealths; and a number of assembly members took part in the discussion of these draft resolutions. Following the conclusion of discussion, the Assembly approved the mentioned draft resolutions.

Maghreb Sources Comment on Al-Asad Tour

PM2803101089 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 22 Mar 89 p 1

[Talhah Jibril report: "Rabat Source Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: "Al-Asad Expressed Desire To Strengthen Ties With Maghreb Union"]

[Text] London, Damascus, Rabat—Informed Syrian sources in Damascus have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the results of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's Arab Maghreb tour which included Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia, will appear at more than one level. According to Moroccan political sources in Rabat, during his tour President al-Asad expressed a desire to strengthen Syria's relations with the Arab Maghreb Union states, which include Morocco and Mauritania, in addition to the states he visited on this tour.

In a telephone interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, informed Syrian sources in Damascus said that the aim of President al-Asad's tour was to boost Arab solidarity against Israel through work for unity of ranks and attitudes. They added that the timing of the tour was linked to an effort to forestall any Israeli aggressive adventure against any Arab country to divert attention from Israel's internal crisis caused by the continuing and escalating heroic popular intifadah [uprising] in the occupied Arab territory.

They revealed that President al-Asad's talks with the leaders of the three countries he visited on that tour covered bilateral relations and a number of other fundamental issues such as the situation in Lebanon, the Middle East developments, and relations with Egypt. Asked if the resumption of Syrian-Egyptian relations was discussed, the sources said that of course relations with Egypt were discussed, adding that Syria's position on this matter was known and that Syria had explained it on more than one occasion.

Meanwhile, in Rabat, Moroccan political circles have followed President al-Asad's tour with considerable interest. [passage omitted]

AL-BA'TH Cited on 'Awn's 'Major Plot'

JN3003080889 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0545 GMT 30 Mar 89

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Despite All Plotting Attempts, Lebanon Will Remain Free and Arab," AL-BA'TH says: Arab and world news media are unanimous that the inhuman and savage military escalation has claimed many innocent lives and placed Lebanon in a new dilemma.

The paper adds: Whoever considers 'Awn's political and military steps since assuming authority, which does not represent anyone in Lebanon, will realize very well that this general is indeed involved in a major plot not only against Lebanon but the entire Arab homeland, because most of its chapters have become clear. Proof of this is the existing satanic alliance between 'Awn's Zionist clique and the fascist regime in Baghdad, which is seeking to involve all the Arabs in wars which do not concern them. Cogent proof confirms that the cooperation between 'Awn and Saddam is in the service of Israel.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Like other nationalists in Lebanon and the Arab World, we in Syria fully realize the aims of the rabid campaign launched by the Zionist clique and its supporters outside the borders. We must affirm here what leader Al-Asad has said that Lebanon's Arabism, unity, and sovereignty is a sacred issue which is beyond dispute. Therefore, Damascus and the Lebanese nationalist forces will continue efforts to save Lebanon from the advocates of sedition, murder, and ruination.

Afghanistan

Mojaddedi Warns Delhi on Sending Pilots to Kabul

BK3003160089 Hong Kong AFP in English 1429 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Islamabad, March 30 (AFP)—The president of the Afghan rebel government Thursday warned India against sending pilots and military advisers to help the Kabul government, the pro-resistance AFGHAN NEWS AGENCY (ANA) said. ANA reported that Sibghatullah Mojaddedi had said that the involvement of Indian pilots and military advisors was "an open interference in our country."

ANA said Indian pilots were bombing mujahidin positions in Afghanistan and that Indian military advisers were helping the Afghan Army. New Delhi has denied such allegations in the past.

Mr. Mojaddedi also warned that the mujahidin would take action against Indian involvement in the war, but did not elaborate. Mr. Mojaddedi is the president of the mujahidin's interim government, which was formed in Pakistan on February 23. The resistance says his government will be installed in Kabul when the mujahidin topple the Soviet-backed government of Afghan President Najibullah.

Perez de Cuellar Seeks More UN Observer Posts

LD3003175189 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Memorandums dated 10 and 22 March from esteemed Najibullah, president of Afghanistan, and the memorandum dated 11 March from the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan, addressed to His Excellency Javier Perez de Cuellar, UN secretary general, described the intensification and expansion of interference by Pakistan and enumerated various violations by that country of the Geneva accords.

In the memorandums, in order to prevent the aggravation of situation on the borders of the Republic of Afghanistan and to halt the expansion of interferences by Pakistan, the UN secretary general was asked to attend to and facilitate the rapid creation of additional UN observer posts at points which are being utilized for the dispatch of weapons and armed extremist groups, in particular at the Parachinar, Towr Kham, Nawagai, Miram Shah, and Chaman, in accordance with the document of understanding of the Geneva accords.

In accordance with this request by the Republic of Afghanistan, His Excellency Javier Perez de Cuellar asked the Pakistani authorities to cooperate with the UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan [UNGOMAP] delegations in Afghanistan and Pakistan to ensure the rapid creation of additional UN control posts at the aforementioned locations. He also instructed the official in charge of UNGOMAP in this regard.

Kabul-Mujahidin Fighting, Casualties Updated

Mujahidin Besiege Feyzabad

BK3003155089 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] In Afghanistan, mujahidin have besieged Feyzabad, the capital of Badakhshan Province, capturing two military posts and ten soldiers with arms.

Meanwhile, fierce fighting continues between mujahidin and Kabul regime forces around the besieged city of Jalalabad. In a fresh offensive on the city, the mujahidin have captured (Parman Towl) post and have blocked the Kabul-Jalalabad Highway.

The mujahidin also attacked the area between Sarowbi and Sar Kond Ow Baba Ziarat in Nangarhar Province, killing 15 soldiers of the Kabul regime and damaging military vehicles and wireless sets.

Major Jalalabad Attack Planned

BK3003163989 Hong Kong AFP in English 1617 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Kabul, March 30 (AFP)—Afghan rebels have fired 8,000 [number as received] rocket and heavy artillery rounds on the eastern city of Jalalabad in the past 24 hours and are preparing to launch another major offensive on the city, the government said Thursday. Five civilians and one government soldier were killed in the shelling on the city and its surrounding security perimeter, while 10 civilians and eight soliders were wounded, a government spokesman said.

At least six Scud missiles were heard being fired from Kabul early Thursday. Eight Scuds were heard on Wednesday, when clouds apparently prevented fighter jets from flying to Jalalabad to support troops there.

(Mujahidin sources said in Islamabad that one of the Soviet-supplied Scuds had hit a rebel position only 300 meters (yards) from the Towr Kham Gate at the Pakistani border on Wednesday, killing at least six guerrillas. Resistance sources also said mujahidin using U.S.-made Stinger missiles shot down a government gunship helicopter which had been attacking rebel positions Thursday in the northern province of Laghman.)

"They (the mujahidin) have intensified their attacks (on Jalalabad) and a large number of Pakistani officers and Saudi advisors have been sent to different areas of Nangarhar Province to help the opposition consolidate and prepare for a massive offensive on the city and its surroundings," the spokesman added.

Jalalabad came under attack on March 5 in the first major mujahidin bid to capture a city after the completion on February 15 of the Soviet troop withdrawal. It has since been shelled heavily by the rebels.

The government has charged that the Pakistani 11th and 18th Divisions have provided direct logistic support to the rebels, most of whom are based in Pakistan, and that Pakistani militiamen have been involved in the fighting. The Kabul government also charged Thursday that Pakistani military intelligence agencies were planning to equip the mujahidin with chemical weapons.

"According to information we h ve received these arms will be bought in Europe and on the open market," Government Spokesman Muhammad Nabi Amani said in a statement later broadcast on national radio. Mr. Amani said the mujahidin were "already in possession of some of these arms" and said the government Tuesday sent a protest note to the United Nations Good Offices Mission on Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP) here. Reliable U.N. sources here denied however that the protest note delivered on the March 28 had specifically mentioned chemical weapons.

Mr. Amani stressed that although the mujahidin had frequently accused the government in Kabul and Soviet troops of using chemical weapons, this was the first time Kabul had accused Pakistan of supplying chemical weapons to the rebels. He said the reports came from "secure sources within the opposition."

Newspapers here say that 22 "foreign advisors" have been killed in fighting in Jalalabad and that three have been captured. The spokesman Thursday put mujahidin casualties around Jalalabad at 84 killed and 23 wounded in the past 24 hours, and said substantial amounts of equipment had been seized.

One government soldier was killed in the western province of Herat, on the border with Iran, in a sweep which left 15 mujahidin dead and another 21 wounded, said the spokesman.

In Kabul an explosion of unknown orgin in a commerial building left several people injured, residents of the area said.

There were conflicting reports of the cause of the blast, which shattered windows in surrounding shops. Some residents said it had been a plastic explosion and others said that a gas cylinder had exploded. There was no immediate official report on the blast.

74 Rebels Said Killed 30 Mar

LD3003170189 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1430 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] A source of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Afghanistan told the BAKHTAR military section that during the past 24 hours, attacks by joint Pakistani and extremist groups on Jalalabad City and the surrounding areas have increased. The enemy has fired more than 8,000 heavy weapons and missiles on the city and its security posts. The report adds that the enemy attacks were carried out from the direction of Ghaziabad supported by long range artillery weapons of the Pakistani Army Divisions 18 and 11. As a result of the shelling, 5 civilians were martyred and 10 others, including women and children, were wounded. One member of the Armed Forces was martyred and 8 others were wounded. Some 11 houses, 8 shops, 1 mosque, and 1 shrine were destroyed or damaged.

In retaliation, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Afghanistan in Nangarhar Province attacked the enemy trenches and front line and compelled it to retreat. As a result of the blows by the Armed Forces in Nangarhar Province, 74 troops of the Pakistani invader forces and those linked to it were killed and 23 were wounded. Among those killed were Ziwar Jan and Mardan, two ringleaders of the extremists, and four Saudi Arabian advisers. Some 8 missiles, 3 mortars, 4 missiles, 2 DShK's, 34 light weapons, and 2 BM-1 units were destroyed from the enemy side, and 2 missile launchers and 4 light weapons were seized by the Armed Forces.

According to intelligence reports and other sources from numerous units and companies, of the enemy's rear guard, it has been said that divisions 11 and 18 of the Pakistani Army, utilizing extensive possibilities in supplying weapons and ammunition, have strengthened the enemy front lines. According to the reports, a large number of Pakistani officers and Saudi Arabian advisers have been dispatched to various regions of Nangarhar Province, in cooperation with the leaders of the armed groups linked to Pakistan, to organize their men and prepare them for a large-scale attack on Jalalabad city and the surrounding areas.

In the course of mopping up and search operations by the Armed Forces in the suburbs of Gereshk city, Helmand Province, 28 members of the extremist armed groups linked to Pakistan were killed and 2 others were wounded. Some 18 Kalashnikovs, 4 rocket launchers with 300 rounds of ammunition, 2 recoilless rifles with 380 rounds of ammunition, 1 machinegun, 3 surface-to-surface missiles, and 3 enemy ammunition and foodstuff stores were seized by the Armed Forces. Two Afghan troops were martyred in these operations and three were wounded.

According to another report, during mopping up and search operations in parts of Herat Province, 15 extremists who are under the protection of Pakistan were killed and 21 were wounded. Two enemy surface-to-surface missiles and two mortars were destroyed. One member of the Armed Forces was martyred in this operation.

As a result of a mopping up operation in Darwaz District, Badakhshan Province, 17 warmongering extremists who disrupted the peaceful life of our compatriots were killed and 13 were wounded. During the operation, 21 enemy weapons was seized by the organs of state security.

According to another report, as a result of an ambush carried out by the Armed Forces in Badakhshan Province, 16 extremists were killed, 38 were wounded, and 1 was captured.

Also during an ambush by the Armed Forces at Qal'eh-ye Sufi, Laghman Province, 14 extremists were killed and 17 were wounded. One rocket launcher, 7 light weapons with 2,000 rounds of ammunition and 27 boxes of assorted weapons were seized by the Armed Forces. One extremist was captured and 5 corpses of those killed by the extremists were recovered.

Kabul Population Accepts Fact of Escalating War

BK3103015689 Hong Kong AFP in English 0151 GMT 31 Mar 89

[By Kate Webb]

[Text] Kabul, March 31 (AFP)—With varying degrees of resignation and in some cases alarm, the dwindling population of Kabul is facing the fact that the Afghan war is far from over and this time may not spare the cities. Hopes that last month's withdrawal of Soviet troops might result in a victory for either side or a negotiated settlement have flared and died.

In some wealthier middle-class homes, the debate over whether to try to leave the country has been revived and queues for visas outside the Indian Embassy—the only foreign mission granting them—are as long as they were during the panicky days of mid-February. In other households, families are making plans to get their sons of draft age out of the country through the "green route" eastwards over the mountains to Pakistan. "The snows have melted," said one businessman. "I have three daughters but only one son. I will get him out soon."

At the Indira Gandhi Hospital for Children, the casualties keep coming in—from the outskirts of the city, and from the eastern city of Jalalabad which has been under seige by the mujahidin since March 5. Doctor Lal Muhammad works overtime in the 250-bed hospital's overcrowded burns unit, supervising work on an undernourished 12-year-old boy whose face is a grotesque black and red mask of burn tissue. The boy's mother, Gul Banu, says he was playing in a field when he was hit by a flare, one of thousands that fall daily from Soviet Ilyushins and Tupolev transport planes carrying out a massive airlift of food and military supplies to Kabul. The flares are dropped as decoys for heat-seeking U.S.-made Stinger missiles used by the mujahidin since 1986. Like 70 per cent of his patients, lying with seared hands and feet held in the air, Aminullah's second and third degree burns will leave him scarred for life.

In a separate ward, four-year-old Shafi Wala has been told that his mother and two brothers were killed in an attack on the Jalalabad road that left him and his sister hospitalised with severe shrapnel wounds.

Hospital administrators say they have been ordered to keep some 20 beds free "in case of emergency." No one will say what the emergency might be. The International Red Cross Hospital, supplied twice weekly from Pakistan by Norwegian charter aircraft with medicines and essentials, is expanding. Pilot Alexander Lange of Oslo says he is bringing in more mattresses, sheets and supplies for the new wards.

The massive Soviet airlift has ensured that the food and fuel shortages that sapped the city during the winter are over. The muddy, pot-holed streets, are again teeming with traffic which halts shortly after sundown, with only the intrepid or the military braving the checkpoints at all major street-corners before the strict 10 p.m. curfew.

In those houses with electricity, Kabul television broadcasts new appeals by President Najibullah for the mujahidin to stop their fratricide. The Soviets have left, he says, the mujahidin can stay in the areas they control and there is no more reason to fight. No one appears to listen, while at night and early morning the dull roar of Scud missiles drowns out the broadcast appeals to mujahidin commanders.

Yuli Vorontsov, the Soviet ambassador to Kabul who tried and failed to negotiate a coalition government before the February 15 withdrawal of Soviet troops, is still calling for a ceasefire. The Soviets will stop supplying the Najibullah government with weapons if the United States halts military supplies to the mujahidin, he says. On the other hand, Moscow will never renege on its treaty obligations with Kabul.

"Nobody cares anymore, no one in the outside world cares, the Soviets have gone and now we feel bitter because of this," shrugged a businessman. "I wouldn't mind if there were a final battle if it would stop the war. Most of us don't care who wins as long as the war stops. If it goes on like this there will be no more people in Afghanistan."

Bangladesh

Iraqi Air Chief Meets With President Ershad

BK3003132889 Dhaka Overseas Service in English 1230 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The visiting commander in chief of the Iraqi Air Force, Air Marshal Hamid Sha'ban, called on President Ershad in Dhaka. During the meeting, Air Marshal Sha'ban thanked the president and the people of Bangladesh for standing by the side of Iraq in the time of need. He expressed confidence that the understanding between the armed forces of the two countries will be expanded in the coming days.

The president also thanked President Saddam Husayn and the people of Iraq for their support and sympathy during the floods and natural calamity.

Pakistani Religion Minister Meets With Ershad

BK2903133289 Dhaka Overseas Service in English 1230 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] The visiting Pakistani religious and minorities affairs minister, Khan Bahadur Khan, called on President Ershad in Dhaka this morning. They discussed matters of mutual interest, including the promotion of the cause of Islam. State Minister for Religious Affairs Nazimuddin al-Azad and the Pakistani ambassador, Riaz Khokhar, were present.

The Pakistani minister also called on the foreign minister, Anisul Islam Mahmud. They discussed the problems of repatriation of stranded Pakistanis from Bangladesh.

India

Reports of Military Aid to Afghanistan Denied

BK3103112889 Hong Kong AFP in English 1117 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] New Delhi, March 31 (AFP)—India described as "baseless and mischievous" Friday reports that Indian pilots and military advisors were helping the Afghan Government to fight the mujahidin resistance.

"These reports are baseless and mischievous and obviously part of a disinformation propaganda," an External Affairs Ministry spokesman said, commenting on charges by a mujahidin leader.

"India is not providing any military assistance to the Afghan Government," the spokesman told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE.

The president of the Afghan rebel government was Thursday quoted as saying that Indian pilots were bombing mujahidin positions in Afghanistan and that Indian military advisors were helping the Afghan Army.

Sebghatullah Mojaddedi was quoted by the pro-resistance AFGHAN NEWS AGENCY as warning New Delhi against military involvement in the Afghan war, saying it would be "an open interference in our country."

India has in recent weeks provided humanitarian assistance, including medicines and baby food, to Afghanistan, where it supports the Moscow-backed Kabul government of President Najibullah.

'All' U.S. Human Rights Findings Not Accepted

BK3003140689 Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1330 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The minister of state for external affairs, Mr K.K. Tiwari, told the Lower House of Parliament today that the government does not accept all the findings of the U.S. State Department's report on human rights in India. He said that Washington did not consult New Delhi prior to the preparation of the report. He, however, noted that while the report is critical of India in certain respects, it also states that India is basically a democratic polity with strong and legally sanctioned safeguards for individuals. The report also makes the reference to the vigorous free press in the country.

Talks With PRC on Scientific Cooperation Begin

BK3103055589 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] An eight-member delegation from China now on a visit to India held talks on cooperation in science and technology in New Delhi yesterday. The Chinese delegation was led by the vice chairman of the State Science and Technology Commission of China, Madame Zhi Lilan. The Indian side at the talks was led by the minister of state for science and technology, Mr Narayanan. The discussions will continue today. The meeting aims at identifying areas of mutual interest and fields where scientists of the two countries can interact. The talks are a follow-up of the agreement on science and technology reached between India and China last December during the visit of the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi.

Spokesman on Trade, Transit Treaties With Nepal

BK3003154489 Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English 1502 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] In reply to a query, an official spokesman said that every attempt has been made, and is being made, to ensure that the lapsing of two treaties with Nepal does not affect unduly the common man of Nepal. The Government of India have taken several steps to try and mitigate difficulties that may be felt as a result of lapse of these two treaties. As I had told you, certain items which are banked for export to third countries are allowed to be exported to Nepal under quota system that Nepalis project every year in advance. They have projected their demand for 1989 and as requested by his majesty's government, supplies of essential items as already projected by them for year 1989 will continue to be sent under provisions of old agreement.

The items are: 15,000 tonnes of sugar; salt as required; baby food (500 tonnes); molasses (3,000 tonnes); copra (2,000 tonnes); coconut oil (100 tonnes). These are their projected requirements for year 1989 and even though treaties have lapsed, there is no attempt to stop the flow of these items which have already been projected and requested for the year 1989. Supply of these items which was requested under old treaties will continue for this year.

In reply to another question, the spokesman said that POL [petroleum, oil and lubricants] is a separate arrangement which lapses on 31st March, 1989. The spokesman also stated that we are conscious of deep nature of our ties of kinship and culture with people of Nepal. We cherish these ties. We do not want these to be marred in any way stop these supplies will go to Nepal through two entry points.

In reply to another question whether India was "bullying" Nepalis, the spokesman said that there is no question of attempts by anyone to do anything of sort described by you. India does not subscribe to kind of methods referred to by you.

In reply to another question whether India's reaction was due to supply of arms to Nepal by China, the spokesman said that as for the supply of arms by China to Nepal, we have conveyed our concern.

The spokesman said that Nepal was fully aware of obligations that devolved upon it consequent upon initialling of arrangement to remove certain discriminatory clauses which they were applying on trade with India. The initiative has laid entirely with them for well over one year. It is not fair, not correct and not accurate in any sense, to describe difficulties that Nepalis may face as being of India's creation. They had fully known their obligations long before. We extended treaty in March 1988 and again in October 1988 at their request as they needed more time.

In reply to a question on reported refusal of entry at Patna of a consignment of Indian currency notes sent by Nepal's Central Bank to RBI [Reserve Bank of India], the official spokesman said that we will make enquiries about it. It could be because of change in trade and transit arrangements. There are different agencies involved, like customs, RBI, etc., and it could be a simple bureaucratic foul up. There is no need to read anything sinister into it. It will be sorted out.

In reply to another question about a shortage of essential commodities in Nepal, the spokesman said that India has taken unilateral measures to ensure that even though treaties have lapsed, essential commodities which have been indented for by Nepalis for year 1989 will continue to be supplied to them even though treaties have lapsed. Quantities to be supplied will remain same as indented. It is precisely because we are concerned about common man who should not suffer any more, because of failure on part of his government to enter into negotiations with us to finalise treaty. We have done everything possible during past 40 years to fulfil our side of obligation whether it is trade, transit, warehousing facility, export of banned items and other concessions. They have to reciprocate and show some degree of understanding for our requirements, especially trade.

Nepal Seeks Dialogue on Issues

BK3103054089 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] Nepal has asked India to hold a meeting of the joint commission to discuss overall economic cooperation between the two countries. A government spokesman said in Kathmandu yesterday that Nepal desires that the officials of the two countries meet immediately to discuss and finalize the trade and transit treaty. He said the Nepalese foreign minister, Mr Upadhyaya, has requested the external affairs minister, Mr Narasimha Rao, to call the meeting of the joint commission in case the officials cannot meet immediately.

AIR [All India Radio] Kathmandu correspondent Sushil Chopra reports that the Nepalese Government decided yesterday to allow the import of certain items like medicines, baby foods, salt and coal from third countries under the open general license. So far, Nepal was getting these items from India.

Meanwhile, India has asserted that it is honoring all commitments made on the supply of coal, petroleum, oil, and lubricants to Nepal under the agreement due to expire today. An official spokesman in New Delhi denied press reports on the unilateral suspension of the agreement by India.

British Foreign Secretary Meets President 30 Mar

BK3003144889 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1430 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The British foreign secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, called on the president, Mr R. Venkataraman, at Rashtrapati Bhavan [President's House] today. A wide range of subjects, including Indo-British cooperation for controlling terrorism, were discussed during the meeting lasting about 40 minutes. They reviewed economic cooperation and exchanged views on the recent developments in the Indian subcontinent.

Thai Premier Continues Visit, Meets Leaders

More on Talks With Rao, Pant

BK3003141689 Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1330 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The visiting British foreign secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, and the external affairs minister, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao, today held detailed discussions on the anti-Indian activity on British soil. An official spokesman told newsmen that both the leaders also discussed international issues. These included disarmament, East-West relations, Pakistan, China, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Southern Africa, and West Asia.

The British secretary also had a brief meeting with the defense minister, Mr K.C. Pant. During his meetings with Mr Rao and Mr Pant, Sir Geoffrey expressed the British Government's appreciation of India's role in Sri Lanka and in Maldives.

Sir Geoffrey had a separate meeting with the minister of state for external affairs, Mr Natwar Singh. The Cambodian issue, the situation in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka figured during the talks.

Confers With Rao on Cambodia

BK3003161689 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] The external affairs minister, Mr Narasimha Rao, called on the visiting Thai prime minister, General Chatchai Chunhawan, in New Delhi today. The talks included the preparations for the first meeting of the newly set up joint commission, which is likely to be held some time next month. An official spokesman told newsmen that the Cambodian issue also figured at the talks.

Earlier, the president, Mr Venkataraman, hosted a lunch in honor of General Chunhawan.

Delegations Discuss Investment

BK3003015289 Bangkok Domestic Service in Thai 0000 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Likhit Hongladarom, Government House deputy spokesman, has reported on official discussions between the Thai and Indian delegations chaired by their prime ministers in New Delhi yesterday, as follows:

Their discussions involved political and joint investment issues. A joint commission has been formed to promote cooperation, along with a joint working team. The foreign ministers of the two countries will alternately head the joint commission, which will meet every year in Thailand or India under the chairmanship of their respective foreign ministers. The commission will have a 5-year term, and it is anticipated that the commission will begin operation in May. There will be about 24 joint Thai-Indian investment projects. Prime Minister General Chatchai Chunhawan encouraged Indian businessmen to increase joint ventures with their Thai counterparts, because Thailand is becoming a major market in Southeast Asia. Thailand's plan to develop Krabi Province on the Andaman Sea will open up its access to the Indian Ocean, thus expanding contacts with India and Europe.

The Indian commerce minister, who had just returned from a visit to Thailand, said he was pleased with increased trade contacts between the two countries. India is interested in the potash project in northern Thailand and in fresh water shrimp farming development in Thailand. He urged Thailand to send teams to India to discuss categories of goods which could be traded.

On the international political situation, the Thai and Indian prime ministers discussed the Cambodian problem. Both sides agreed that peace should be brought to Cambodia as soon as possible because these days no country is interested in war but many are interested in trade. India is pleased that Thailand has been an initiator of peace in the region. India too has been trying to create a peaceful environment in the region and to bring tranquillity and greater trade and industrial contacts between the two countries, and among other countries as well.

Last night the Indian prime minister hosted a dinner in honor of the Thai prime minister and his delegation. In his speech at the dinner, Gen Chatchai said that as the first Thai prime minister to visit India he would like to enhance closer bilateral cooperation and relations, which will contribute the promotion of durable peace in Asia because India is a gateway to the East and Europe while Thailand is a gateway to Southeast Asia.

This morning the Indian foreign, commerce, and science ministers will pay courtesy calls on the Thai prime minister. This afternoon the Indian president will host a luncheon for the Thai prime minister, while the Indian Industrial Federation will host a dinner for him.

Banquet Speech Detailed

BK3003140389 Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in Thai 1030 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Prime Minister General Chatchai Chunhawan delivered a speech at the dinner reception hosted by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in his honor yesterday.

Chatchai said that truly speaking, Thailand and India are very similar to each other. The peoples of the two countries have cultural similarities and a similar way of life. This is the reason why for a long time both countries have successfully consolidated a strong foundation for their cultural and trade relations in favor of their mutual interests for the future. In addition, the geographical locations of the two countries are conducive for future cooperation. India can serve as a gateway to the Middle East and Europe for countries in Southeast Asia, and Thailand can be the gateway to the Asia-Pacific region for the South Asian countries. Cooperation between Thailand and India should serve as a positive factor for strengthening peace and stability in Asia.

The present improving international situation is an historic event which all countries worldwide should take advantage of by forging constructive and improved relations—regardless of different political ideologies. Changes are taking place all over the world. Peace and cooperation are replacing ideological confrontations. India, as a leading member in the Nonaligned Movement, has been playing an important role in the search for settling regional problems. Its close ties with several world powers that are involved in those regional issues and its historic bonds with Southeast Asia will enable India to positively contribute to the search for a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the Cambodian problem. We are all hoping that, from now on, all parties concerned will turn to each other for a solution based on the spirit of compromise and flexibility in order to achieve a genuine and durable peace for Cambodia.

In addition to regional peace and stability, our two countries also need to cooperate in order to achieve economic growth and progress. On this subject, economic and technological cooperation should be expanded. We need to muster efforts and resources in our common fight against poverty, and we need to achieve development. If we could achieve this common goal, the 21st century would not be just an era of close Thai-Indian cooperation with a growing significance for both countries, but also an era of progress and abundance for the two countries and their peoples.

Sees New Port as 'Economic Bridge'

BK3103100189 Hong Kong AFP in English 0922 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] New Delhi, March 31 (AFP)—Thailand is building a deep sea port on its western coast which could serve as an "economic bridge" to India, Thai Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan said here Friday [31 March].

The port facing the Andaman Sea could serve as Thailand's gateway to South Asia and beyond and as an outlet for Indian goods to Southeast Asia, Mr. Chatchai told a news conference.

"We want to build an economic bridge across the Andaman Sea between western Thailand and eastern India," he said on the fourth day of a five-day official visit, the first to India by a Thai premier. He said possible Indian collaboration in the deep sea port project would be discussed by a newly-formed joint commission expected to meet soon. He denied the project had any military implications.

Mr. Chatchai, who is accompanied by 55 prominent Thai businessmen, industrialists and bankers, said his visit had sparked "a new and exciting promise" of closer Indo-Thai economic ties. He invited more Indian investment in Thailand, adding that joint venture products could be exported to members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) under preferential trading arrangements.

Ten joint ventures are already in existence in Tnailand, where India is the 12th largest overseas investor. Trade has increased from a paltry 42 million dollars in 1980 to some 330 million dollars last year. Mr. Chatchai said there was much more "room for active and fruitful cooperation."

India and Thailand signed an agreement Wednesday to set up a joint economic commission which they hoped would lead to an increase in trade, joint ventures and exchange of technologies.

The two countries stressed in a joint statement Friday the need for developing countries to cooperate more closely in multilateral trade negotiations. They also emphasised a threat posed to the multilateral trading system by protectionist barriers imposed by developed countries and "long standing distortions" in world agricultural trade.

Joint Press Statement Issued

BK3103091289 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] India and Thailand have urged all parties concerned to cooperate in finding an early political solution to the Kampuchean problem. They called for steps to ensure the emergence of a sovereign, independent, neutral and nonaligned Kampuchea, which will not be a threat to any of its neighbors.

This was contained in a joint press statement issued in New Delhi today at the end of the talks between the visiting Thailand prime minister, General Chatchai Chunhawan, and Indian leaders.

Referring to bilateral ties, they said the setting up of a joint commission is an important step which will lead to an increase in trade and setting up of more joint ventures.

The two sides expressed the view that protectionist measures taken by the developed countries pose a threat to the multilateral trading system. They called for closer cooperation among the developing countries in the trade negotiations under the Uruguay Round.

Later, addressing a news conference, the Thai prime minister described his talks with Mr Rajiv Gandhi as very productive.

Referring to his government's plan to build a deep sea port, General Chunhawan said this will help linking the western coast of Thailand with the eastern coast of India.

Voting Age Lowered; 47 Million Added to Rolls

BK3003141889 Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1330 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] An additional 47 million people in India acquired voting rights with the Constitution Amendment Bill becoming law. The president gave his assent to the bill today. The bill reduces the voting age from 21 to 18 years. The measure was passed unanimously by Parliament a few months ago. It had to be ratified by a dozen state legislatures in terms of the Constitution before it could be put to the president for his formal assent.

Opposition Assails 'Wrong Policies' on Punjab

BK3003161289 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Parliament has passed the Punjab Appropriation Vote on Account Bill providing for withdrawal from the consolidated fund of the state for the services of a part of the next financial year. The bill, which was approved by the Lok Sabha earlier, was returned by the Rajya Sabha today.

Replying to the debate, the minister of state for finance, Mr B.K. Gadhvi, reiterated the government's eagerness to restore normalcy in the state. He said the package of measures announced by the prime minister is working well. Mr Gadhvi said the state has shown substantial development and has exceeded the seventh plan targets in some fields despite uncongenial atmosphere. He assured the house that the work in the Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal will not suffer because of funds.

Earlier, taking part in the debate, members expressed concern over the situation in the state and said special efforts are needed to improve its economic health.

Opposition members alleged that the problem of Punjab is due to the wrong policies of the government. Ruling party members said that the opposition is playing a negative role and misleading the people.

'Terrorists' Kill 4 People in Gurdaspur District

BK3103091689 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] In Punjab, terrorists shot dead four persons including three members of a family in separate incidents last night. A sarpanch [village headman], his son and grandson were killed in Brahma Attari village in Gurdaspur District.

In Ludhiana District, terrorists fired at a couple killing the husband on the spot and injuring the wife.

Meanwhile, security forces have arrested six more terrorists during raids in various parts of the state. In Haryana, a deputy superintendent of police was seriously injured and the driver of his jeep killed in a terrorist attack near Surajpur on Panchkula-Pinjo Road in Ambala District today. Two terrorists were also injured when the police fired back.

New Surface-to-Surface Missile Test in Apr

BK2903135689 Hong Kong AFP in English 1328 GMT 29 Mar 89

[Text] New Delhi, March 29 (AFP)—Indian experts have begun a countdown on a new surface-to-surface (SS) missile to be tested next month, the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (PTI) said Wednesday. The SS missile, codenamed Agni (fire), would be launched from a test range in the Chandipur area southwest of Calcutta in the eastern state of Orissa, the news agency said.

PTI did not give the exact date of the launch in April but said local residents from several villages in the area would be moved 2.5 kilometres (1.5 miles) away as a precaution. They would be given a week's notice to move, V.S. Arunachalam, scientific advisor to the Defence Ministry, was quoted as saying. He told reporters at Chandipur that the evacuation was neccesary as the missile's technology was not foolproof.

Previous plans to launch the SS missile have been aborted due to fierce resistance from some 10,000 villagers in the area who have expressed fears that the test might lead to large-scale destruction of crops.

Agni is India's first attempt at launching a military rocket with the capability of an Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM). It has a range of 2,500 kilometres (1,550 miles), defence officials here said.

Mr. Arunachalam said New Delhi would not be able to afford more than three tests of the IRBM-class missiles in a year and described next month's test as a "technological demonstration."

More than 300 experts and defence scientists were said to be preparing for the launch from reinforced sunken bunkers.

Several vital components of the SS missile, capable of carrying atomic warheads, have been brought to Chandipur from a defence laboratory in southern Hyderabad city and would be fitted at the test site, Mr. Arunachalam said.

The missile, developed by the state-owned Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), features a first-stage solid propellant engine and a second-stage liquid-fuel motor.

In July, India unsuccessfully tested a locally-built Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV) which crashed into the Bay of Bengal 150 seconds after take-off.

The conventional first-stage engine with a range of 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) used in the Agni missile is similar to the one used in the Satellite Launch Vehicle-3 class rockets.

The Agni's launch comes 13 months after the successful test-firing of a short-range SS missile, which made India the fifth country after the United States, the Soviet Union, France and China to have developed such a weapon.

The SS missile, codenamed Prithvi (earth), had a flight-range of 250 kilometres (155 miles) and formed one of the mainstays of India's ambitious integrated guided missile development programme which has developed a family of missile systems since 1983.

Iran

Khamene'i Praises Khomeyni Succession Decision

LD3103114489 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] On the threshold of Yom-Allah [God's own day] on 12 Farvardin [1 April]—the anniversary of the establishment of the sovereignty of Islam and the Koran on our country—the monotheist people of Iran today, by

their presence at those places where unity is manifested, once again emphasized their resolve to continue their revolutionary movement under the leadership of the great leader, His Holiness Imam Khomeyni. They stressed that the movement must continue until full victory is achieved against global apastasy. The religious-political rites of the Friday prayers were held in Tehran also, with the participation of the masses of the hezbollah ummah. The Tehran Friday prayers were held under the leadership of Hojjat-ol Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i at Tehran University and in the adjacent streets.

Referring to the arrival of the auspicious month of Ramadan [Muslim month of fasting] in his Friday prayers sermons, the Tehran Friday prayer leader asked all the country's Muslims' to prepare themselves for the month of God's feast.

The president termed the anniversary of the Islamic Republic of Iran [IRI] [on 1 April] as one of the great feasts of the Iranian nation. He said that on that day the people voted for the IRI and thus neutralized all the arrogant powers' efforts to eradicate Islam in Iran. He said that today the IRI is a fixed and decisive point for humanity.

Referring to the decisive move of the imam of ummah on the future leadership of the revolution, Mr Khamene'i said: One of the causes of pride for the IRI is the existence of the beloved leader, who continuously thinks about carrying out his duties and mission [taklif] toward God and Islam.

He added: In Islam, the interests of Islam and the regime take precedence over all other affairs, including private individual and group interests; no other consideration can overrule this. One of the outstanding characteristics of the beloved imam is this very decisiveness and his determined bid to carry out his divine mission. The every single measure he adopted during the revolution and the life of the IRI will go down in history as a bright sign [ayeh].

The president stressed that Islamic society needs such decisiveness to counter world dangers. He said that if the imam's decisiveness and strength did not exist, then either the IRI would not have been born or, if it had, it would have been destroyed by now. We must learn the required lesson from this event and keep in mind only our duties. Referring to the implementation of the law on state punishment [qanun ta'zirat] which will be enforced as of 20 Farvardin [9 April], Mr Khamene'i asked the executive organs and the judiciary to rigorously enforce the law.

He said that the law on state punishment—which was approved by the Expediency Discernment Council after a long series of debates and research on its strengths and weaknesses—envisions that the government will investigate offenses by state organs, while investigation of offenses committed by the private sector will be relegated to the Ministry of Commerce and the Islamic revolution courts. We hope all strata will cooperate with each other and the government and Islamic revolution courts will zealously eradicate from our society the ugly phenomeon of hoarding, overcharging, speculating, and profiteering.

Montazeri's Protest Over Executions Cited

PM3103090889 Paris LE MONDE in French 29 Mar 89 p 6

["Y.H." report: "Iran: Imam Khomeyni's Successor Could Be Challenged"]

[Text] The Iranian revolution is definitely still devouring its own children. With one purge after another in an unending power struggle, the man designated as Imam Khomeyni's successor in 1985 could well now be sacrificed by Khomeyni. Though Hoseyn 'Ali Montazeri has already experienced periods of disgrace in the past, the warning signs could be stronger this time.

Indeed the "guide of the revolution" held an emergency meeting Sunday 26 March with members of the Council of Experts Secretariat—the same body that designated the 66-year-old Montazeri as the imam's successor. However, the council, composed of clerics, is also authorized to reverse its decision. In view of the many criticisms that the imam has made of all those whom he regards as "liberals," it is very likely that Ayatollah Montazeri's "qualities" are no longer regarded favorably by the imam.

Unlike the other Iranian leaders, especially the "pragmatists," Ayatollah Montazeri has openly condemned the revolution's excesses and spoken out against what he calls "the genocide of prisoners."

At the height of a tide of executions of political prisoners following a brief but bloodthirsty offensive launched by Mas'ud Rajavi's Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization from Iraq on 31 July, Ayatollah Montazeri addressed the imam directly, exhorting him to end these executions "of thousands of people within the space of a few days." "The majority of the prisoners had renounced their beliefs, but certain extremist officials treated them as though they had clung to their positions and therefore executed them," Ayatollah Montazeri wrote. He went on: "To execute prisoners on whom sentences have previously been passed when they have committed no subsequent offense, is an insult to the earlier sentences."

"It is no longer possible to keep count of the injustices and sentences passed under the pressure of events. Many innocent people and people guilty of minor offenses have been executed following your latest order," Montazeri told the imam, urging him to demand that "women, and especially mothers of families, no longer be executed."

Just 3 days later the "successor-designate" returned to the attack to draw the attention of the "guide" to the arbitrary way in which the judges "selected" those to be executed.

Finally, on 15 August Ayatollah Montazeri sent a letter to the officials responsible for the repression in Tehran's Evin prison, condemning the "genocide," which constituted "an encouragement to continue the armed struggle" (against the regime.) "It is wrong to combat thinking and ideas with terror."

Monday the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization announced the execution—on an unspecified date—of Rajavi's own sister. She was arrested in 1982 together with her brother, who was executed 3 years later.

Toilers Radio Comments on Montazeri Resignation
LD3003213389 (Clandestine) Radio of the Iranian Toilers in Persian 0230 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Station commentary]

[Text] Dear listeners, the report about the resignation of Ayatollah Montazeri, Khomeyni's deputy, which was announced in the past 24 hours, is the hottest and most sensational event of the past few days in our country. Without doubt, this event is one of the most important political developments on the Iranian social scene. Please pay attention to a commentary on this issue:

The resignation of Ayatollah Montazeri from his post as deputy chief jurisconsult should be regarded as a most important event, having a special significance. Despite the differences existing within the government of the clerics, no event of such importance has taken place in the past 10 years. Although in the course of conflicts among various sides the government has passed through stages such as the elimination of the liberals, Bani-Sadr, and fragmentation within the ruling clerics, etc., the resignation of the official deputy chief jurisconsult—and according to members of the government, the illustrious jurisconsult and a pillar of state—belongs to a different category.

The importance of this evaluation regarding the significance of Montazeri's resignation stems from the fact that this time it is not an ordinary government pawn who has resigned, but the undisputed and official successor to Khomeyni. A first-rank cleric within the governing group has withdrawn from the stage. This time the event has taken place with Khomeyni's knowledge and inside one of the power bases of the government, which has always been in contact with a diverse spectrum of forces belonging to different sides and groups revolving round the ruling clique. This fact gives Montazeri's resignation a different, qualitative dimension.

However, Ayatollah Montazeri's resignation is of great importance from another point of view, namely, that the Montazeri's great move is both a reflection of the incurable crisis within the format of the government of the Islamic Republic, as well as being a product of it. When one of the principal elements within the highest echelon of power can no longer find for himself a place in the position of succession to the chief jurisconsult, this clearly proves that the regime is immersed in a quagmire of crises, and proves that the system, which in the name of the rule of the jurisconsult [velayat-e faqih] has faced our country and nation with a blood-thirsty calamity, has no future.

Montazeri's resignation from his position as Khomeyni's successor is clear proof of the fact that the regime of clerics is rotten from the inside, that it contains serious cracks, and is bound to disappear. In other words, the regime of the supremacy of jurisconsult is a dictatorial and medieval system, which relies solely upon the absolute rule of a creature in the name of chief jurisconsult. It is in such contradiction with the realities of Iranian society and faces so many internal contradictions after 10 years of crisis-ridden government that it expels the number two man in the system. This point should attract the attention of all the social forces opposed to the regime of clerics; this has practical implications.

This issue proves that the mobilization and organization of all the forces which are against the regime of clerics is an important issue and a clear duty of those movements. Montazeri's resignation from the position of deputy chief jurisconsult is another clear sign of the intensification of the all-out crisis facing the government and another proof of a bleak future and a definite disintegration of a regime which for 10 long years has oppressed the Iranian people.

One should take advantage of this important political event, and prepare ever-accelerating offensives against the fortresses of the regime of the clerics. All the forces opposed to this regime should think seriously and act on this issue.

Resignation Places Regime on 'Deathbed'
LD3003215589 (Clandestine) Radio of the Iranian Toilers in Persian 0230 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Dear listeners: The analysis of the reasons and factors leading to Ayatollah Montazeri's resignation—in other words, the climax of the leadership crisis in the Islamic Republic—proves more than ever before the regime's shaky foundations and its lack of a future for rule of the jurisconsult [velayat-e faqih]. In fact, with his resignation, Montazeri has officially announced that he does not see a future for the despotic system of the rule of the jurisconsult, in which he could regard himself as the deputy chief jurisconsult today and the actual chief jurisconsult tomorrow.

Up until yesterday in his speeches, messages, and even private letters to Khomeyni and other leaders of the regime, Ayatollah Montazeri spoke of his efforts to safeguard the prestige of the regime and of his worries for its future. Now with his resignation, he has implicitly announced that he has lost all his hopes and that he regards his efforts to maintain the present set-up as futile.

The issue which is worth pondering is that Mr Montazeri is resigning at a time when some of his political and social views are seen as more valid, as the result of the offensive launched by the radicals. However, as the crisis and the outlook of the regime's downfall have encompassed the entire fabric of the system of the rule of the jurisconsult, and as Montazeri has lost any hope of any future for such a system, the strengthening of the radicals cannot devalue his conviction about the bleak future that awaits the ruling despotism.

Khomeyni's reply and reaction to Montazeri's reaction in itself is another clear sign of the fact that the regime is on its deathbed. It also reveals Khomeyni's failure to solve the regime's internal differences and ensure even a minimal amount of unity among the system's founders. Having lost hope in persuading Montazeri to remain in his post as his successor, Khomeyni has adopted a vengeful approach to him. Khomeyni also confesses that at the time of Montazeri's appointment as his successor by the Assembly of Experts, he was displeased with that choice.

There is no doubt that with Montazeri's resignation the crisis of leadership and the system of the rule of the jurisconsult will assume an unprecedented intensity. Apart from Montazeri, there is no other cleric who enjoys the least degree of needed influence within the governing clique. Therefore, the leaders of the regime are studying the issue of a leadership council more seriously than before. However, at a time when differences are intensifying and when various sides are strengthening their ranks, the formation of such a council is full of insoluble difficulties and complications.

Under these conditions, Montazeri's resignation has further intensified the leadership crisis in the ruling system in an unprecedented way. In fact, the course of the disintegration of the regime of the rule of the jurisconsult, which has already started during Khomeyni's lifetime, has now assumed greater urgency.

In analyzing the reasons for Montazeri's resignation, one should pay special attention to the national tragedy of the massacre of political prisoners. Some time ago, Montazeri had warned about the intense suppression and the regime's crimes in the prisons and expressed his displeasure. However, he found the massacre of thousands of political prisoners within a few days so frightful that he completely lost hope about the future of such a blood-thirsty regime. In his letters to Khomeyni he asserted: I am looking to the judgment of the future generations and of history. The world will condemn us. Or now you have cut off the telephones and visits, but how will you answer the families [of political prisoners] tomorrow?

In this way, Montazeri declared Khomeyni the primary culprit; in other words, the murderer of thousands of political prisoners. This delivered the last blow to his links with Khomeyni and with the system of the rule of the jurisconsult. Montazeri's letters to Khomeyni and to the tribunals issuing the execution decrees were a turning point in his political life. Now even Montazeri has joined the regime's black list, and his physical and political life is being threatened.

One cannot doubt that Montazeri's resignation will increase the scope of crisis and will turn a group of the forces around the governing circles and those elements which are under his influence toward more intense conflict with Khomeyni and his absolute and personal dictatorship. The regime of the rule of the jurisconsult has no future, and its downfall is near.

UN Envoy Said Seeking Political Asylum in U.S.

TA3003185889 (Clandestine) Iran's Flag of Freedom Radio in Persian 1630 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Following the resignation of Mohammad Ja'far Mahallati, the Islamic Republic's delegate at the United Nations, it is being said in New York that he has asked for political asylum from the U.S. Government. Previously, Mahallati had been quoted as saying that he is obliged to remain in the United States for some time in order to continue his medical treatment.

It is worth noting that the Islamic Republic's UN delegate had resigned from his post in protest of the regime's illogical policies. Mohammad Javad Larijani, the deputy foreign minister, resigned from his job before Mahallati.

*Majlis Deputies' Letter Praises Prime Minister

46400069 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 1 Feb 89 p 10

[Text] Esteemed leader of the Islamic revolution, His Excellency Imam Khomeyni, may his shadow extend. Greetings.

As your blessed memory is aware, the prime minister, as the one responsible for the Supervisory Council, is the guardian of the Commerce Ministry—because a minister of commerce has not yet been designated—and can organize the meetings of the Supervisory Council under his own mangement. Moreover, according to law, he can make decisions and communicate the decisions of the Supervisory Council to the guilds and unions.

Regarding Your Excellency's guidance with respect to actions within the framework of the Constitution and observance of the law, it was expected that the dedicated and devout guilds would be content and hopeful about

the enforcement of the law. Unfortunately, individuals within the guilds, instead of paying attention to the country's sensitive condition and making an effort to support the country's officials and government, added to the anxieties and dissatisfaction by organizing meetings and circulating letters. Therefore we, the undersigned Majlis representatives, while protecting and supporting this legal action of the Supervisory Council and honorable prime minister, request the esteemed leader, in whatever manner he deems advisable, to state the necessary reminder and guidance.

Signed: Hedayatollah Aqayi, Mohammad Baqer Nowbakht, Hazrati, Ma'zi, Assadollah Bayat, 'Isa Velayi, Montakhabnia, Musavi-Tabrizi, Majid Dabestani, Nikfar, Rowhanizadeh, 'Abdollah Hoseyni, Rasti-Lari, Ahmadi, Asgharzadeh, Rahchamani, Partowi, Musavi-Lari, Suri, Tahayi, Robati, Eshaq Jahangir, Saleh-Abadi, Qolizadeh, Aflatun Ziafat, Pur-Mohammadi Falah, representative of Lamard, Sadeqiani, Fakhredin Hejazi, Mohsen Nariman, Nejadian-Fard, Shafe'i, Hadi Qafari, Najaf Qoli Habibi, Rahim Nejad, Borumand, Qolamreza Heydari, Haqi, Asadi, Razavi-Yazdi, Davudi-Shamsi, Morteza Aluyeri, Ja'fari-Esfahani, Ahmad Rahbari, Sa'idian-Far, Vaqfi, Asadollah 'Abedi, Zabihollah Safai, Rostami, Mohaqar, Moqtedayi, Eslami, Hamtayi, Aqayi, 'Abdolkarim, Zovalqadr, 'Alla', Qolizadeh, Khodanazar Qasemi, Rowhani-Nia, 'Abdolrasul Musavi, 'Anayat, Tateli, Hasani-Sa'di, Malek-Asa, 'Abdollah Nowruzi, Qahraman Rahmani, Najafi, Khosrowi, Ahmadi, Qorishi, Kotirayi, Esma'ili, Khak, Sahmi, Astaneh, Mo'tamedi, Asghar Nowruzi, 'Abbas Dozdvazani, Rahmati, and tens of illegible signatures.

Velayati To Deliver Khamene'i Note to Gorbachev

LD3003152589 Tehran IRNA in English 1520 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Tehran, March 30, IRNA—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati flew to Moscow today, carrying President 'Ali Khamene'i's message for Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Velayati's visit follows an invitation from his Soviet counterpart Eduard Shevardnadze.

Before his departure, Velayati told reporters that the Islamic Republic has always favoured expansion of ties with the Soviet Union based on good-neighbourly relations.

The growing trend of Tehran-Moscow ties reached its climax with the exchange of messages between the leader of the Islamic revolution and the Soviet leader, he added, referring to Imam Khomeyni's unprecedented letter last January and Gorbachev's response brought by Shevardnadze a month later.

The foreign minister said that he would discuss bilateral ties as well as regional and international issues with Soviet officials, during his second trip to Moscow. The last time Velayati visited the Soviet capital was in February 1988.

Interviewed Before Departure

LD3003172789 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Interview with 'Ali Akbar Velayati, minister of foreign affairs, by Nafisifar, correspondent of the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic, prior to Velayati's departure for Moscow; date, place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Nafisifar] Your Excellency Mr Velayati, please tell us which Soviet officials you will meet and what topics you will discuss during your visit to the Soviet Union.

[Velayati] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. This visit takes place at the invitation of Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, the honorable minister of foreign affairs of the USSR. The relations between Iran and the Soviet Union are long-lasting relations. The two countries are neighbors, and the Islamic Republic has always strived to have good-neighborly relations with its neighbors.

Of course, during the past year we have witnessed more positive and important changes in our relations with the Soviet Union. The message of his holines the imam, may his shadow long continue, to Mr Gorbachev should be regarded as the high point of these changes. Subsequently, Mr. Shevardnadze delivered the Soviet leader's reply to his holiness the imam.

During the past few weeks and months you have witnessed the exchange of various delegations between the two countries. The nature of the positive trend in relations between the two countries, and the rapid changes which have come about in the region and in the international arena necessitates that exchanges of opinion are carried out between the two countries frequently and at different levels. Therefore, we are visiting the Soviet Union today and will meet with high-ranking and responsible officials of the Soviet Union and, God willing, we shall have discussions about bilateral relations and regional and international issues.

Embassy in Vienna Denies Links to Belgian Murders

AU3103115089 Vienna DER STANDARD in German 31 Mar 89 p 2

[Excerpt] Vienna—[Passage omitted] A spokesman of the Iranian Embassy in Vienna told DER STANDARD that the embassy does not know any details about the assassination [of 'Abdallah al-Ahdal, spiritual leader of the Muslims of the Benelux countries, and his assistant in Brussels on 29 March], but that one cannot approve of death squads in principle. The condemnation of the apostate Salman Rushdie by revolution leader Khomeyni was a religious condemnation and has been approved by all 46 Islamic countries. "We are not aware of any guilt on our part. Death squads have nothing to do with the Iranian Embassy," the spokesman said. Such questions are offensive to an embassy. He said: "Why do you not ask the CIA or the KGB?" [passage omitted]

Hashami-Rafsanjani Arrives in Khuzestan Province
LD3003180689 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the acting commander in chief of the Armed Forces and the speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, arrived in Dezful this afternoon to study the military and reconstruction situation in Khuzestan Province and to meet with the inhabitants of that resistant province. He was welcomed by the representative of the imam and the Friday imam of Ahvaz, the governor general of Ahvaz, members of the clergy, some local dignitaries, and members of the families of martyrs.

On arrival, the acting commander in chief of the Armed Forces said in an interview: During this visit, the situation of the defensive forces and the progress of implementing reconstruction plans, which were started last year or which will be started this year, will be studied.

The Majlis speaker added: The investigation of the condition of the imposed war's refugees and meetings with the people are among the other reasons for this visit.

According to the Central News Unit report from Ahvaz, this afternoon the acting commander in chief of the Armed Forces went to the operational base of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the Islamic Republic of Iran's Armed Forces. In a meeting with military commanders, he was informed of the latest defensive situation in the southern region.

In this visit, the minister of the Construction Jihad, the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, and some of the Islamic Consultative Assembly deputies from Khuzestan Province are accompanying Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Khomeyni Receives Kerman Province Athletes
LD3003181889 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Excerpts] Twelve runners from Kerman Province, after a race of 1,150 kilometers, were received by the imam of the ummah this morning. At the meeting, in which a number of sports officials of Kerman Province, as well as Mr Dargahi, supervisor of the physical training organization, were also present, a plaque was presented to the imam of the ummah. It said that athletes of Kerman Province pledge their support to guard the gains of the Islamic revolution on the occasion of God's Day, 1 April. [passage omitted]

Seminary Students Vote for Representatives
LD3003120789 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 30 Mar 89

[Text] In implementation of the instructions of the imam of ummah regarding the institution of development in the religious seminaries, as well as utilization of the views of revolutionary seminary students who have served at the war fronts, the first session of electing representatives from among the seminary students was held this morning at the Feyziyyeh Religious Seminary of Qom.

IRNA reports that the learned people [fozala], instructors, and students of seminaries from various towns participated in this election session to vote for their representatives. These representatives will engage in debates and exchange views, as well as relay the views of the religious seminary students to the instructors and the management council.

It must be recalled that in this round of elections, which will be held in six religious seminaries today and tomorrow, clerics from all over the country will elect their 150 representatives.

Pakistan

New Cabinet Members, Bhutto's Mother Sworn In
BK3103083089 Islamabad Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] Two new federal ministers and six ministers of state [appointed on 23 March] were sworn in at Aiwan-e Sadr [the Presidency] in Islamabad this morning. President Ghulam Ishaq Khan administered the oath. The new ministers and their portfolios are:

Begum Nusrat Bhutto—senior minister without portfolio;

Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani—minister for tourism;

Mrs Shehnaz Wazir Ali—minister of state for education;

Mr Ahmad Sayeed Awan—minister of state for industries;

Mir Tariq Hussain Maqsi—minister of state for labor and manpower;

Mr Shah Nawaz Junejo—minister of state for local government and rural development;

Syed Zafar Ali Shah—minister of state for water and power; and

Father Vincent Julius—minister of state for minorities.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended, among others, by federal ministers, ministers of state, advisers and senior officials.

Nusrat Bhutto To Preside Over Cabinet Meetings

OW3103123289 Tokyo KYODO in English 1215 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] Islamabad, March 31 KYODO—Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Friday included eight more ministers in her cabinet making it the largest ever in Pakistan's history.

The ministers sworn in Friday included her mother Nusrat Bhutto who has been appointed senior minister with the designation of minister without portfolio.

Nusrat Bhutto will preside over Cabinet meetings in the absence of her daughter.

With the additions, the number of ministers in the Bhutto cabinet has now risen to 43.

Bhutto Addresses Meeting in Rawalpindi 31 Mar

BK3103153089 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1506 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Text] Prime Minister Ms Benazir Bhutto has said that all Muslims are one community and Pakistan will reach them for their help with sincerity. She said this while speaking to the members of the fifth international [word indistinct] conference in Rawalpindi this evening. She said that during his administration, the late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto made efforts to promote solidarity among Muslims. The prime minister said the protection of the country's stability is the responsibility of the elected representatives and this task will not be accomplished by those people who have usurped the rights of the people. She urged the members of the group to uphold Islamic values and principles.

Benazir Bhutto Interviewed by Indian Paper

BK3003020189 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 21 Mar 89 pp 1, 12

[Interview with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto by Karan Thapar in Islamabad, 18-19 March]

[Text] Karan Thapar: Prime Minister, let me begin with a question everyone wants to hear you answer. How did you, a modern, liberal politician react to the sentence of death passed by Ayatollah Khomeyni against Salman Rushdie?

Benazir Bhutto: I do not want to start a controversy with Iran or with any other country by getting into the pronouncements of its individual leaders but as far as Pakistan is concerned we feel that this issue emanated from the fundamentalists who hadn't made much headway with their earlier plea or platform regarding their reservations about a woman heading a government and suddenly they started circulating Urdu translations of this blasphemy to ignite the passions of the masses who are Muslims.

Q: As a Prime Minister do you believe that it is the business of heads of governments to be issuing death sentences to citizens from other countries?

A: The primary duty of a government is to protect the life and the liberty of its citizens. The Rushdie book had two consequences. On the one hand, there is freedom of expression and on the other the lives and liberty of people. We banned the book because we believed that was the right thing to do in the interests of law and order. But we also thought that it was in the interests of the state because there are certain matters such as religion, when a blasphemy is committed, that it is important not to promote blasphemy. I believe that in England there is a law prohibiting blasphemy against the Protestant religion.

But I want to say something more: I don't know how much Muslims have to gain from keeping this whole Rushdie affair alive. If you repeat a blasphemy you commit a blasphemy, and everytime the Muslim fundamentalists have raised this issue it would seem to me that they are also committing a blasphemy by giving Rushdie's novel and its contents greater publicity.

Q: You seem to be evading my question so let me put it you again. Do you support the sentence of death or do you think the Ayatollah should have refrained from such an action?

A: I can not answer that because whatever I say will be interpreted as the action or statement of the Pakistan Government.

Q: In that case since you refuse to criticise the sentence do you think that the decision of last week's Islamic conference not to endorse the death sentence was the right decision?

A: We have a large Shi'ite population in Pakistan, aside from which religious sentiment on this book is running very high. Iran is our neighbour and we wish to have good relations with our neighbour. I can always speak in this interview for Pakistan, but I don't think that it is right of you to try and pull me into direct confrontation with the leaders of other nations.

Q: You are personally in a unique position, you are a Muslim and you have been educated in the West. So in a sense you straddle both worlds. Do you understand the horror and even the disgust that this sentence of death has evoked in the west?

A: I see that you are very concerned about the sentence of death and I do accept and understand that that is an important issue in England as the sentence has been passed against one of its subjects. But the concern of any government must be for its own subjects. It would be more worthwhile for us to turn to the questions which agitate the minds of the people of Pakistan.

Q: Let me reverse the question: Do you think the West has made a mistake in failing to understand and appreciate the disgust the Rushdie book has caused in the Muslim world?

A: I think when we play with anybody's sentiments it leads to anger. For instance, speaking personally, I remembered when I read Rushdie's book "Shame", it made me feel very angry, very frustrated. And when this other one came out, it was a book which touched upon the religious chords of many people, for instance 30 people have died in India and Pakistan and that is testimony to the strong emotions this book has aroused. That's where I think there should be an understanding that blasphemy does cause pain and believers must be protected and also that they have a right to protest against blasphemy.

Q: Moving on to the question of the image the book has created of the Muslim world in the West, do you regret the way the demonstrations and behaviour of Islamic fundamentalists have portrayed your co-religionists?

A: I didn't understand that this would be an interview about Rushdie, I though you wanted to interview me about Pakistan, I think we should drop the Rushdie subject. I have said what I want to say about it. I think I have answered enough questions about the Rushdie book. There are other far more valuable things you could more profitably talk to me about.

Q: All right there is a lot of comment in the Western press that you had to make substantial concessions to the caretaker authorities after the elections and before you were accepted as Prime Minister.

A: I would like to put this business about concessions right from the time we took over the government, there has been no end to speculation.

The Pakistan People's Party is not prepared to stay in power at the mercy of anybody but the people of Pakistan. We have fought and we have struggled and we have paid a heavy price for democratic values and constitutional rule. Our party was elected as the largest single party in the last elections and if the elections had been fair there is no doubt in may mind that we would have won an outright majority.

The compromises we may have made were minimal and they were for continuity and they were made for what we believe in. For instance, the retention of Sahabzada Yaqub Khan as Foreign Minister was not done because it was demanded as a price of power but as a signal to the friends of Pakistan who were concerned that the new situation in Pakistan, the dramatic changes with the death of Ziaul Haq and the introduction of a new Government might cause anarchy, and in the interests of the orderly business and conduct of the state.

For instance, before coming into power we had called for a policy of national reconciliation and we had said we would not seek revenge and for that reason, it was our decision to accept Ghulam Ishaq Khan as President. But that was our decision and it was not a compromise or a concession forced upon us. It was the considered opinion of the Pakistan People's Party that in the search for national reconciliation it would assist us in having a President who would be above controversy because he would be elected by both the political parties.

Therefore, I would like anybody who says that it is not so to give us the reasons for their contrary beliefs.

Q: Well, one of the comments made by both Pakistani and foreign journalists is that Afghan policy is controlled by the Army's Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI] Directorate and not by our Cabinet.

A: That is not true. There is an Afghan cell which is headed by the National Security Adviser who is a civilian, and in that there are Cabinet members. The National Security Adviser is a Cabinet member. The Foreign Minister, who is also in the cell, is a Cabinet member as is the adviser for defence. And the ISI reports to the Prime Minister. In the case of this particular Prime Minister, the ISI reports through the National Security Adviser. Further, its policies have been in accordance with the dictates of the civilian government.

Of course, I don't say that there are not many people of the Zia years left; I don't say the legacy of the Zia years, a bitter one, is not still there; I don't even say that there are no difficulties but I do say that every action or every decision taken by this Government is taken to promote, democracy and to strengthen it. If there was any step which we felt was not in accordance with this principle we simply would not do it. We can always sit on the opposition benches.

Q: Turning to Afghanistan more directly, the Islamic Conference [Organization], of which your Government is a member, recently invited the mujahidin to take up Afghanistan's seat. In the case of Pakistan does that mean that you have officially and formally recognised the mujhahidin government?

A: I don't think this amounts to a formal recognition yet. Pakistan has not formally recognised the interim government. This is a matter for the future. We certainly wish the Afghan Government well. We have noted that it is headed by a moderate, Mojaddedi, and that despite all the claims to the contrary the leaders of the alliance came together in a remarkable display of unity. This unity should be welcomed and strengthened.

Q: What further qualifications are you looking for from the Mujahidin Government before you are prepared to recognise it?

A: There are many considerations involved, but as larger areas of Afghanistan come under its control Pakistan will certainly consider the question of recognition.

Q: Are you inhibited by the fact that it excludes both the Shi'ite mujahidin and members of the Kabul regime and therefore, may not be as representative of the Afghan people as you would like?

A: The Government is not inhibited by the absence of those associated with the present Kabul administration or those associated with groups based in Iran although we would certainly welcome such an inclusion as indicating a broader base, but this is for the Afghan people to decide and if the present Afghan government believes that without the inclusion of those sectors it can still maintain an administration then we shall have to see if that is so with the passage of time. However, if we talk of preferences, naturally the broader the base of the government the more welcome it would be.

Q: Talking of preferences is it true that Pakistan or shall I say the ISI, has a preference for Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and his Hezb-e Eslami Party as the future rulers of Afghanistan?

A: I would like to convey the fact that the Pakistan Government has no desire to wish upon the people of Afghanistan any one head of government. All are brothers and they have all lived on our soil. This is a matter purely for the people of Afghanistan to decide and determine. We will welcome any group or any individual who has the backing of the people of Afghanistan.

Q: Last week the Soviet Union repeated its charge that Pakistani soldiers and generals were fighting with the mujahidin inside Afghanistan. What is your reply?

A: Not a single Pakistani soldier has crossed the border, and not a single Pakistani soldier will cross the border. This is an Afghan war and we do not want to get involved in an Afghan civil war. We will do whatever we can to promote peace.

Q: Why then do you think they repeatedly make this charge? Why did Mr Vorontsov make such a strong and high profile statement of accusation?

A: I think he has his reasons but they are certaintly not based on fact. But my guess is that this is an indication of the weakness of the Kabul regime. They know that they cannot hold out, they would like to put the blame elsewhere.

Q: How do you react to India's recent agreement to supply humanitarian aid to the Kabul regime?

A: India has from time to time taken a certain posture vis-a-vis Afghanistan. That is they right to do so. But we in Pakistan believe that the sooner peace and stability return to Afghanistan the better and from the information and assessment we have such a peace and such a stability is not possible with the keeping in power of the present Kabul administration.

Q: So India's action is against the peace and stability you seek?

A: That's not what I said. I simply said what Pakistan wanted, that's all.

Q: Do you see the escalated fighting inside Afghanistan as a deterrent to the return of the three million Afghan refugees on your northern border?

A: The continued civil war is a matter of great concern to Pakistan. The sooner it comes to a satisfactory conclusion the better. And the task of reconstruction and rehabilitation cannot begin until then. And that places a greater burden on our own resources and on our own economy. Therefore, we in Pakistan sincerely wish to promote, as best we can, the return of a government in Afghanistan which is in accordance with the aspirations of the people.

Q: Turning to the superpowers, you met President Bush in Tokyo last month. Are you confident of Pakistan continuing to receive the same quanitity of American aid now that Soviet troops have withdrawn from Afghanistan and Pakistan's strategic importance has diminished?

A: Pakistan has a strategic importance of its own. its geographical position on the Gulf and also the Indian Ocean give it importance. And I think this has been recognised since the inception of Pakistan and will continue to be recognised. But I would say that Pakistan is a young democracy and the success of this democracy is the success of all those who believe in freedom. And that is why I certainly hope that the assistance to Pakistan will get a sympathetic hearing in the Senate and in the Congress.

Q: Well, of course, much depends on how they view Pakistan's nuclear policy. Is your country today in a position to build a nuclear weapon?

A: I don't think one should look at it in terms of the question of what sort of knowledge you have. One should look at it in terms of what sort of goals you have, what sort of policies you have, and Pakistan does not believe in nuclear proliferation. We want to strive to free our region from a nuclear arms race and we want to work towards keeping this South Asian region free. Therefore, we have no desire to make a nuclear bomb. However, we have every right to pursue our own research programmers and our energy programmes.

Let me also explain that the reason why we view this matter regionally is because if one country in the subcontinent makes a bomb it will put immeasurable pressure on other countries to resort to the same strategy.

That is why a regional solution is an inherent ingredient of an area which is free. We understand that India takes a global position but our position is that whilst global non-proliferation is a worthwhile objective to pursue, nonetheless the regional option should not be excluded. [passage in boldface as published]

Q: So are you confident that next month the US administration will give the necessary certification that Pakistan is not making a bomb so that you can receive aid for 1990.

A: We have informed the United States administration about our policies and I am sure they are well aware from their own independent sources about our policies. They know that Pakistan is a proud nation, an independent nation, a sovereign nation and Pakistan cannot have any aspect that impinges on its sovereignty. I think at the same time that it is not the goal of the Pakistan Government to make a nuclear bomb and the statement can be borne out of their own independent assessment.

Q: What about relations with Moscow? Before you came to power you were keen on friendly relations. What have you done in the last 3 ½ months to achieve that?

A: We are still keen to promote good relations with Moscow. We believe that the return of Soviet troups has provided an opportunity. Our minister of state has gone to Moscow and will be holding a dialogue with the leaders. I too have met the Soviet leaders who have visited Islamabad and we will be pursuing this goal.

Q: I know that before you came to power you expressed interest in Mikhail Gorbachev and his reform plans. Do you, speaking as a politician, admire him?

A: I think he has been courageous enough to take bold steps for the restructuring of his economy. There are not always easy answers, and change is frightening to those who are used to the status quo, but he has had the courage. I admire that. And in Pakistan also I would like to see the new government take bold decisions for Pakistan's basic economic problems and not easy gimmicky answers which can please for a short time.

Q: You had a very successful meeting with India's Prime Minister recently. How did you get on with him?

A: I found that he accepted Pakistan's desire for talks on bilateral and regional issues at face value. We reached agreement on several matters and most importantly a good momentum was set.

Q: Do you think the two of you have established a rapport which perhaps could help bridge the traditional antagonism and rivalries which divide the two countries?

A: If personal rapport was the solution I am sure there would be very few difficulties and problems left in the world. But issues are more complicated than that. Individuals do not operate in total control but against a subjective background and there are always restraints in every society. There are always suspicions. We both want to see Pakistan and India improve their relations.

Q: What sort of relationship with India are you aiming for?

A: To put it in a nutshell we would like to reduce tension. But it is a question of moving step by step to boost confidence between the people of the two countries.

Q: The impetus comes through the leaders of the two countries who set an example and a tone. Do you think that to do that you need to institute regular six monthly meetings with the Indian Prime Minister?

A: We are in favour of frequent exchanges and I hope that they will be possible between the leaders of the two countries.

Q: As you said tensions lie at the heart of this relationship. Whilst General Zia was in power India used to frequently accuse Pakistan of aiding and abetting Sikh terrorism. Of course, General Zia denied it. But now that you have replaced him have you found that India's accusations were in effect correct?

A: We are both, that is to say India and Pakistan, very concerned about making the border more safe and secure. India has some apprehensions about the question of Sikhs. My government has assured India that it has no intention of indulging in its internal affairs and we believe that our good relations depends on a mutual understanding.

Q: India's regional role used to be another source of tension during General Zia's time. He was suspicious and wary of the presence of Indian soldiers in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Are you more sanguine?

A: I think the inherent greatness of each country comes from its own values and its own internal strengths. Secondly, I think Afghanistan shows the failure of military policy as a successful instrument of foreign policy. It is a matter of concern, one cannot say it is not, when the armed forces of one nation are sent to another nation, but at the same time I believe that Pakistan has within itself a capacity to give itself the strength the nation needs.

Q: Turning to the Pakistan Army and its relationship with your government, you committed yourself before you came to power to treating this institution with kid gloves, but how long can any democratic government tolerate such a powerful army which absorbs almost 45 per cent of the budget?

A: The army has played an extremely valuable role in the transfer to democracy and I think this should be understood and appreciated. The present chiefs of the armed forces have lent their full support to the democratic order. This augurs well for Pakistan.

Let me also say that the size of the Pakistan Army is in response to the security environment and unless that improves it becomes a necessity, one that one may not want but one that is essential in the interests of the state. Also, don't forget, that the size of an army does not prevent a coup. There are countries with just two tanks but have managed to have a coup.

Q: So are you saying that for the foreseable future you do not feel free to reduce the enormous Army budget?

A: The armed forces and the civilian government have a good understanding and a good working relationship. The restraints which are on the armed forces or the civilian government have to do with the the security interests of Pakistan. Unless the security environment is improved it is very difficult for any nation to take a step which could endanger it, such as cutting the army for the sake of it. We would welcome any talks within the region on this subject because we do not want an arms race or a over-mighty army. Nonetheless, I think it is important to understand that it is the security environment which dictates the need and the necessity of the armed forces and their size.

Q: Finally, you have inherited an economy with a massive deficit, high inflation, a bankrupt treasury, and a falling savings rate. What policies will you pursue to put this right?

A: Firstly, we believe that we have got to live within the budget. That is what we have tried to do by saying we will reduce the budget deficit. We have not indulged in deficit financing or monetary expansion. Secondly, we are engaged in a process of privatisation so that we can raise internal resources from our own country. Thirdly, we are setting up investment banks which, we feel, can mop up some of the resources within the country. We also want to encourage private sector enterprise and initiative. In the case of income tax we have made the system more efficient. In fact the tax representatives have informed the government that, as a result of us not interfering, the revenues have already begun to rise.

Also we are considering extending the tax base within Pakistan. And so you will see that through this multi-pronged attack, privatisation, making tax collection more efficient, extending the tax base, and not resorting to deficit financing, we hope to be able to put the economy back on the track. But it will not be easy, or done quickly and it will have to be a national effort. The problems of the Zia legacy are so bad that sacrifices and hard work will be necessary from everyone. But the government is determined to give a clear lead and I am sure that the nation will pull together.

Commentary Defends Bhutto Government Policies

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[Station commentary]

[Text] It cannot be reasonable in any way to form a definite opinion about the success or failure of a government elected for 5 years in its first 4 months in office. However, by noting the trend of events one can certainly have an idea whether it is moving toward success or failure. A bird's eye view of the performance of the first 4 months of Prime Minister Ms Benazir Bhutto's government will definitely reveal it as a good beginning—a beginning which reflects the hopes and aspirations of the people.

The fact is that the November 1988 general elections were held at a time when the national horizon was covered with clouds of uncertainty. Doubts were being expressed about the restoration of the democratic process and its success. But the influential circles in the country were determined to inject democracy into national life. They not only held the general elections in a very peaceful atmosphere, but foiled all conspiracies and machinations, and assisted in transferring power to the party which emerged as a symbol of federalism in all four provinces. This showed the people's extraordinary confidence in the People's Party, as well as the beginning of an arduous trial for that party.

We now see that, while the People's Party's government under the leadership of Prime Minister Ms Benazir Bhutto has sobered the sanguine elements, the problems could not be resolved instantly, and it has disappointed its political opponents to a great extent . The performance of the elected government in the short period of 4 months proves that it is strongly committed to the priorities it set in connection with the solution of the national problems. The most important task before the nation after a long period of dictatorship was the restoration of its prestige and honor and the respect for its people's rights. After coming to power, the People's Party gave direct attention to this problem.

All political prisoners, who were either detained without trial with no charges brought against them or were given long sentences by military courts through summary trials, were freed. This was not merely a matter of releasing political prisoners, but also a declaration of basic human rights and civil liberaties in a civilized democratic society, as well as the admission that ignoring the people will make the claim of restoration of democracy meaningless. In the second stage, the government restored the rights of students to form unions in educational institutions, and allowed trade union activities in industrial units, factories, and workshops.

Although these are but a few steps, it could be seen that Prime Minister Ms Benazir Bhutto's government has freed society from those restrictions and bonds with which it was tied during the period of dictatorship. It is such a big change in society and politics that it could not have even been imagined during the last 11 years. For the first time the mass media is enjoying such freedom in the country that it is free to commend or criticize the government's measures. This way it can play its proper role in organizing and awakening the public opinion. In fact, the People's Party government has made itself accountable to the people within 4 months by eliminating all forms of social excesses.

The speed with which the government has taken measures in the economic field and its performance in political and social areas is commendable. The prime minister in her address to the nation on 23 March expressed the determination that with the people's cooperation she will face all challenges with courage and fortitude. The most pressing problem for the country at present is to control unemployment and inflation. The prime minister has frankly admitted that all the unemployed cannot be absorbed into public services, although the government would participate in private and self-employment schemes. The loan distribution system is being simplified in this connection.

The plan to control inflation and curb price increases is also under the government's consideration. A comprehensive labor policy to improve working conditions and the living standards of workers and laborers is in the blueprint stage. Attempts to arrive at a consensus on a national education policy are underway. The health policy is also being given final touches to provide better facilities to the people. A People's Program is being started under which the people will formulate development plans according to their respective needs.

If so much has been accomplished within 4 months and a clear planning pattern has surfaced for the country's construction and progress, it is an argument in favor of the government's success and augurs well for a happy future.

Sri Lanka

Industrialist, Union Leader Among 19 Killed

BK3103154189 Hong Kong AFP in English 1509 GMT 31 Mar 89

[Excerpts] Colombo, March 31 (AFP)—Suspected Sinhalese militants shot dead a leading textile industrialist and a trade union leader here, while at least 17 people were killed in violence elsewhere in Sri Lanka, officials said Friday [31 March].

Police said six suspected rebels of the Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP, or the People's Liberation Front) stormed the office of Amrit Harilal Amalean, Indian-born director of Nagindas Industries, at his family-owned factory in suburban Dehiwala Friday afternoon and shot him dead.

His chief accountant, Sri Chandran, who was with him at the time, sustained serious injuries and had been admitted to a city hospital, they said.

Police said the attackers had overpowered four security guards at the factory before entering Amalean's office.

They said they were investigating whether a labour dispute at the factory, which employs nearly 3,000 workers, had anything to do with the killing. [passage omitted]

Security officials said a trade union leader belonging to the ruling United National Party (UNP) was shot dead by the rebels at Mattakuliya, another city suburb, Thursday night. [passage omitted]

A military official here said three Tamil terrorists, as members of the Tamil separatist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are officially called, were killed Thursday in an exchange of fire with Sri Lankan security forces. [passage omitted]

A spokeswoman for the Indian High Commission (embassy) said one Indian soldier was killed and one was injured when they were caught in a booby-trap explosion set off by the LTTE at Puttur in northern Jaffna Peninsula Wednesday. [passage omitted]

The spokeswoman said two LTTE rebels were shot dead by Indian troops in separate encounters in Jaffna and Wanni areas Wednesday. [passage omitted]

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